

Sight and Sound

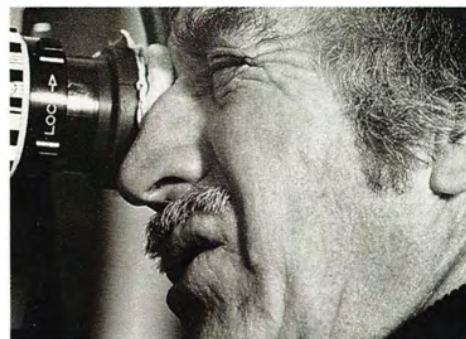
John Berger celebrates Time and the cinema

Plus

Every new film and video reviewed inside

Don Siegel

Looking into the heart of darkness



Helena Bonham Carter in 'Where Angels Fear to Tread'

Twilight of the English

Filming Forster: can we still worship at the shrine of the Edwardians?



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Sight and Sound

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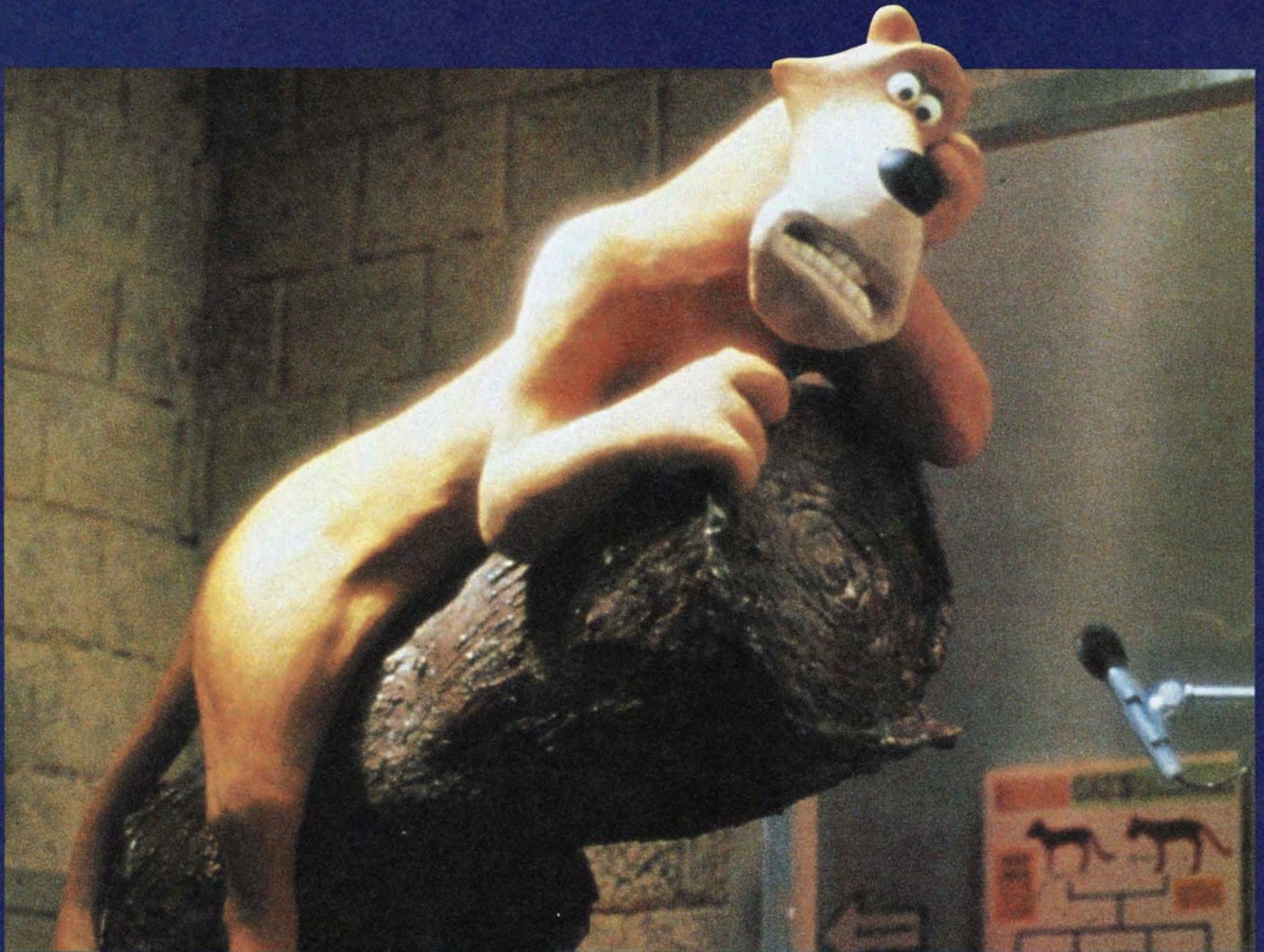
William Green reviews all this month's releases **66**

Zap the box
(page 24)



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An English inheritance

Contributors

John Berger's books include *Ways of Seeing*, *Lilac Flag and Pig Earth*; **Peter Biskind** is executive editor of *Premiere*; **Geoff Brown** is film critic of *The Times*; **Mark Kermode** is a freelance critic and broadcaster; **Tom Carson** writes for *LA Weekly*; **Cairns Craig** is completing a new book, *Out of History*; **Michael Eaton** is an award-winning film and television scriptwriter; **Lizzie Francke** writes for several publications including *The Guardian*; **John Francis Lane** is a writer on cinema who lives in Rome; **Richard Johnson** is a freelance writer on television; **Morando Morandini** is the film critic of the Milan newspaper, *Il Giorno*; **John Powers** is film critic of *LA Weekly*; **Ruby Rich** was until recently director of the Electronic Media and Film programme at New York State Council on the Arts; **Henry Sheehan** writes for *Hollywood Reporter*, among other newspapers; **Jenny Turner** was until recently books editor of *City Limits*; **Elizabeth Wilson** is co-editor of the recently published *Pornography: the case against censorship*.

David Lean, acclaimed as one of the major British directors, has died. And the British film industry is in danger of doing so too – or at least that appears to be the prevailing belief on the first anniversary of the Downing Street meeting about the terrible financial state of the industry.

That was the heady occasion in June 1990 when the then Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, finally met key members of the British film industry and promised to take the lead in an ambitious programme of fiscal reform and structural change in the industry. None of this has been forthcoming, although as we go to press there is hope that the additional £5 million for European co-productions over three years, offered in addition to tax and structural reforms, will finally come through – even if in revised and even less generous form.

The money is certainly needed, not least because of the DTI's messing about with British Screen's main grant of £2 million per annum. Originally, the plan was that British Screen would have to make 'best efforts' to raise matching private investment; it is now a requirement that it does so before the annual grant is continued.

Clearly everyone (except the government?) wants the film industry to be sustained and revived, whether this takes the form of persuading producers to use our facilities and expertise, or enabling British film-makers and companies to work here. Yet to say this is not to pretend that funding is the only problem. What seems at least as pressing is what kinds of films within a reinvigorated industry we would want to sustain. Would we, for example, want a British film industry that produced a successor to David Lean?

Given his Oscar-laden career, the praise lavished on him by the obituary writers, and the esteem in which a number of film-makers hold him, the question may seem absurd. But in one way David Lean, from the mid-50s on, shares with some of those actively trying to revive the industry a certain sense of Englishness that, however understandable in the past, should have no place in the future.

David Lean's films can be considered as 'epic' only if the term is defined simply as a large number

of extras and splendid and exotic landscapes. At their heart is that emblem of the Home Counties, the emotionally and often sexually repressed English middle-class male who struggles to liberate himself. What happens in the later films is that the same kind of man, with the same kind of problem, is transported to a variety of 'exotic' and often post-colonial locations: Burma (*The Bridge on the River Kwai*), the Middle-East (*Lawrence of Arabia*) and India (*A Passage to India*). These later films have a way of either reducing all historical and cultural conflict to the personal, or sidestepping it altogether, as in *A Passage to India*, where the last sequence of reconciliation between Indian and English is at odds with the less comfortable close of the novel.

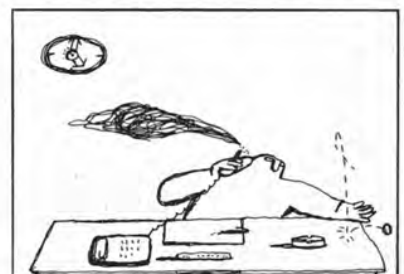
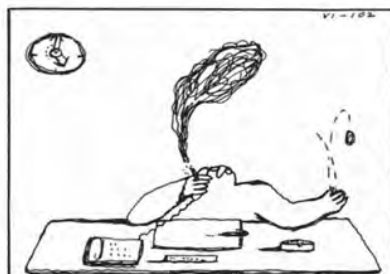
Lean's later films were the forerunner of those well-crafted productions of Merchant/Ivory, equally enthralled by a repressed Englishness and blind to the particularity of other cultures. Salman Rushdie remarks in an essay reprinted in *Imaginary Homelands* that when David Lean claimed that until he began to film *A Passage to India*, the country had never before been represented on the cinema screen, he was assuming that Indian film-makers did not count. Lean's assumption seemed to be that if an Englishman had not done it, it had not been done.

It is this ideology of Englishness which those wanting to revive the British film industry should guard against. But it is there in some of the statements currently being made to drum up support for our beleaguered industry. When people say they want Britain (for which, read England) to become the film capital of Europe and lead the fight against the might of Hollywood, they can seem to be endorsing a traditional English metropolitan viewpoint.

Struggling against this Anglocentrism, where the old language of nationalism is dressed in new European clothes, is a different vocabulary of co-operation, of Britain as one among equals in partnership with other European countries. It is this vocabulary that must triumph if Britain is to have a serious role in sustaining a variety of new European film cultures – not least its own.

JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon - James Sillavan ©



'Jerry, our two sure-fire hits have stiffed, our major summer release won't be ready 'till Christmas, a cash rich Jap machine-tool company is eying us up as a tasty entrée, then this morning I lost in straight sets to Warren... Jerry, you've gotta get your act together.'





Boys and arrows

Mass observation

Richard Greene stands on the edge of a TV forest, his eyes fixed on a brighter tomorrow, secure in the knowledge that the show will run and run.

A man of the people but an aristocrat – a natural leader of men. One of the Brylcreem boys; a Battle of Britain pilot grounded in the twelfth century; a Dan Dare in Lincoln green – sagging a little at the waist, perhaps, but still possessed of a strong jaw and ripened vocal chords which mark him out from the loyal rabble.

Not exactly a man of action – little of the swashbuckling in the 50s Rediffusion Television 'Adventures of Robin Hood' involved the exertion of more than the wrist muscle – but more than ready to engage in a fair fight for what he knows is just. And hardly the great lover either – little boys in post-war Britain would never have stood for such slop – but still content to share an occasional chaste kiss with Maid Marian to reassure mums and dads that he wasn't having too much fun with those Merry Men. All in all, Richard Greene was the archetypal 50s English hero.

Now, thirty-five years later, another Robin stands on the studio battlements. Eschewing the joviality of Hollywood predecessors such as Douglas Fairbanks and Errol Flynn, Kevin Costner is a man with a mission. No reason to doubt his prowess with a longbow – what better tutors than the Sioux? – but some sartorial updating has been required. Presumably a clause in his contract forbade green tights?

This is a Prince of Thieves ready to let fly his arrow at the Sheriff, now a devil-worshipper – perhaps a more comprehensible incarnation of evil for teenagers whose history lessons leave them ill prepared for the complexities of feudal injustice. This is a Robin who will have to earn the respect of the far-from-merry riff-raff who'd never trust a toff, but on their own couldn't organise a deer hunt in a game park. And this is a Robin who will have to engage in a series of thirty-somethingsque spars with a feisty Marian who is far from sure that the future she wants is as Mrs Earl of Locksley.

Let's go do some good Kevin, you follow in a noble lineage.
● 'Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves' opens on 19 July

RONALD GRANT

Imperial measures

A few weeks ago some friends and I were watching a videotape of Don Siegel's 1949 *The Big Steal*, a knock-about thriller which sends Robert Mitchum and Jane Greer romping down the backroads of Mexico with spud-faced William Bendix hot on their trail. When it ended we sat around talking about how much more we love breezy American genre pictures than the dull, overstuffed 'quality' cinema of - I'm afraid I mentioned the name David Lean.

Siegel and Lean died within a few days of each other and the local media accorded them roughly equal space. Siegel was treated affectionately as 'one of us' - a Hollywood pro who made snappy pictures with the likes of Clint Eastwood. Lean was viewed with awe - to judge from the press, he was one of world cinema's leading artists.

If anything could bring out my America-first feelings in this ghastly spring of Operation Desert Storm, it was such a judgment. Though Siegel can't be considered a great film-maker, his movies are incomparably better and more exciting than Lean's: they are about the small gestures that really define our lives rather than the Big Important Themes that Lean constantly dredged up from classic novels.

Officialdom

Indeed, it's hard to imagine two film-makers less alike. Siegel's movies are sneaky-smart portraits of mavericks like Dirty Harry Callahan who choose to spend their lives beyond the pale of official culture - the very culture that Lean always represented. Though Lean was also drawn to romantic outsiders (most obviously T. E. Lawrence), the literal-minded perfectionism of his storytelling turned outlaw romanticism into just another form of plush, middle-class spectacle. It says it all that Lean couldn't conceive of making a sci-fi picture like Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, but did conceive of bodysnatching the original conclusion of *A Passage to India* and replacing it with something that would make the audience happier.

I don't mean that Lean was a terrible film-maker. His adaptations of Dickens are sharp; Lawrence has undeniable bursts of real grandeur; my mother wept at *Brief Encounter*. He was the Leonardo of the BBC-style adaptation, and by the standards of the 90s his work is striking for its solidity and craftsmanship. But it's also remark-

able for fetishising huge-scale productions, international locations, liberal-minded themes - in short, for being the last cinematic efflorescence of the British imperial spirit. Compared to *Point Blank*, *Don't Look Now*, *Blade Runner*, *My Beautiful Launderette* - all by British directors attuned to the present - Lean's movies, from *Bridge on the River Kwai* on, seem like the work of a gifted taxidermist.

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Gross affairs

It's a local axiom that the most creative people in Hollywood aren't the film-makers (anyone could make *Sleeping with the Enemy*, after all), but the people who write the contracts and keep the ledgers. Still, even cut-rate cynics like myself were startled by the recent announcement that *Batman* - the fifth highest grossing movie of all time - is still hopelessly in the red. Barring the discovery of an eighth continent populated exclusively by teenagers, this mega-hit will never sell enough tickets to turn a net profit.

In the through-the-looking-glass world of movie finance, none of this means that anybody lost money - indeed, Warner Bros raked in a cool \$80 million for distributing the film. But the *Batman* case offers an extraordinary glimpse into what we Angelenos call the "psyche" of the industry.

I didn't meet a soul who was surprised that Warner Bros spent \$63 million dollars to advertise *Batman*, though this was \$10 million more than the film cost to make. Blitzkrieg hype has become so much a part of the film-making process that there was universal admiration that Warner Bros had spent its money so cleverly, transforming a lumbering thriller into an international phenomenon.

No, it wasn't the advertising budget that had people gasping. It was the deal Jack Nicholson cut for starring as The Joker - \$6 million up front and a contract that earned him between

15 and 20 cents on every box-office dollar, boosting his total earnings from that picture to \$50 million.

While I kept wondering how much Nicholson might have earned had he given a good performance, industry execs were left to bemoan the golden-goose-killing avarice of superstars like fat Jack and musclebound Arnie, who now insist on taking a cut of the gross receipts instead of settling for a percentage of the net profits. Which is another way of saying that the studio bosses are nostalgic for the days when stars put themselves at the mercy of studio accountants, a group legendary for their genius at cooking the books so there are no net profits left to distribute to anybody.

Cheech Marin of the potthead comedy team Cheech and Chong once told me a story that explained vividly why it's not simply greed that prompts today's biggest names to demand a cut of the gross. Early in their career, he and Chong made a dopy comedy, *Up in Smoke*, for less than \$5 million; within a year it had sold \$100 million dollars in tickets. At the time we talked, the studio hadn't yet paid Cheech a cent, claiming that the movie was still in the red. This was in 1988. *Up in Smoke* had been released ten years earlier.

I asked Cheech if he thought the bookkeeping was crooked. He smiled and said that his attorney had warned him about libel. And I recalled what a screenwriter friend said when I moved to LA: "There are only two things you need to know about Hollywood finances. They're going to cheat you. And they're going to get away with it".

Twins

It was always part of David Lean's legend that he stayed aloof from such sordid financial preoccupations, that he was a beacon of integrity in the fog of crassness blowing across the Atlantic towards Britain. But looking at Lean's career from the uncivilised reaches of California, I find it hard not to be tickled by the way his cultured monumentalism is indistinguishable from the tradition of highminded Hollywood grandiosity that recently led to Oscars for *Out of Africa*, *The Last Emperor*, *Dances with Wolves*. It tells you something useful about both American dreams and British nostalgia that Lean's post-imperial fantasies are also those of the thuggish Yank vulgarians who spent \$63 million covering the world with *Batman* logos.



David Lean: cultured monumentalism

Look on the bright side

I went to see *Guilty by Suspicion*, Irwin Winkler's film about a 50s Hollywood director caught up in the red scare, with some trepidation. I am only just beginning to recuperate from an obsessional identification with the period, which culminated in the writing of the film *Fellow Traveller*. My abiding response to Winkler's film must be one of relief: I have the feeling that if he had stumbled across those dark days in his nation's history a couple of years sooner, then our financially modest project would never have reached first base. As a development executive in the US told me: "We've been looking for a blacklist picture for years – it's ironic it should come from a Brit".

Given Hollywood's understandable reluctance to put on to film its own shame, the images of that time for those of us who did not live through those years are entirely documentary. There are the superstars walking down the steps of the plane to support the Hollywood Ten; a young Ring Lardner Jr telling the Committee that he could answer their question as to whether he was now or had ever been... but he'd hate himself in the morning; Nixon finding the microfilm in the pumpkin patch; red-necks piling into Robeson fans at Peekskill; a glazed-eyed Senator Joe banging the table and shouting: "Point of Order, Mr Chairman" as his fantasy collapses around him.

The only dramatic film I have seen from that time which dealt unambiguously with the social and psychological trauma of blacklisting was Daniel Taradash's *Storm Center*, made in 1956. This, significantly, is not about the motion picture industry, but about a librarian who refuses to remove a book about communism from the shelves. Small wonder that the rare films which attempt to talk about the blacklist become the subject of scrutiny.

American critics were by and large interested in *Fellow Traveller* not because of the way its script tried to deal with the mythology of blacklisting, but because of the ambiguity about which side of the political divide it came from. For liberals, a heart can only be observed to be beating if it is worn dripping on the sleeve, while for conservatives the film could only be seen as a glorification of communism.

Perhaps it was just foolishness on my part to attempt an archaeological dig on the historical unconscious of a society which is terminally amnesiac



Robert De Niro: drenching us with moral uplift

To be downbeat is the great sin in current cinema, argues Michael Eaton after watching the new blacklist film

about its own past – but which has done its utmost to colonise mine. Named and nailed as an 'art film', *Fellow Traveller* could be dismissed for refusing to take up a position on whether Hollywood glitterati were right to be red.

Winkler is the latest and wealthiest tenant who's moved on to the blacklist block to sweep out the cobwebs and install electric lighting. *Guilty by Suspicion* operates from the assumption, doubtless justified, that nobody in its audience will know anything about the politics of the period it depicts, thus guaranteeing that anyone who does will be offended. There are those who will assert that they could have done it better, which will only prompt me to ask: then why didn't they try?

Abraham Polonsky reportedly severed his connection with the project because Winkler couldn't countenance the prospect of a hero who is an unrepentant communist. *Guilty by Suspicion* has a different kind of good guy: a successful movie-maker and a decorated war hero who in his past has aligned himself to causes dedicated to the betterment of the oppressed of his species and who was kicked out of Party front meetings for arguing. He is not someone who will gain the world only to lose his soul.

Marxism is relegated to a memorable cameo in which a chirpy Martin Scorsese, presumably playing a disguised version of Joseph Losey, leaves his cutting room: "I'm going to England... I'm a communist..." Books are burned in this film, too, but they're *Huckleberry Finn* and *Catcher in the Rye*.

Winkler's film ends before the real story starts. An uncompromised hero, reunited with that abiding symbol of rectitude, the wife and mother, emerges clean from the (superbly reconstructed) committee hearings. So

the audience hits the pavement drenched with moral uplift, convinced that none of us would have been so yellow as to shop our old friends for mere wealth, fame and success. If the movie ends on the right climactic note, then it matters not what's going to happen to our hero after the lights come up.

The problem with the movie for me lies not so much in its ducking of so-called politics as in its collapse before the conventions of a life-affirming story. Perhaps what we should all worry about is our involvement, as spectators as well as producers, in an industry whose stories preclude the possibility of irony, of ambiguity, of doubt. The great sin in contemporary cinema is not to be political, but to be downbeat. The loyalty oath we have to take today is to the good story well told. Movies are more wedded to narrative inevitability than Marxism was to historical inevitability.

A great blacklisted screenwriter told me that the reason he joined and stuck with the communists was that everyone he knew could see how society was wrong, but only the reds provided an analysis of why. Another great blacklisted screenwriter, who survived those years by writing for the British children's TV show *The Adventures of Robin Hood* under a series of front names, once told me how it used to break his heart when he saw his youngest child watching *Robin*. He couldn't even admit that it was he, Daddy, who had written the show in case the kid might proudly blurt that out in the playground, endangering the family's tenuous and clandestine grasp on an income.

Somewhere between these two testimonies, which attest to the fact that all of us possess an intellectual life as well as a set of emotional reactions, lies the possibility for another kind of story.

And still this period continues to pose moral questions in the sharpest of relief. A common insult of the time, levelled against those who against their better judgment and the Party line still struggled at what they would probably have termed the dialectic between the demands of political principle and mass entertainment, was: "Workers of Hollywood unite, you have nothing to lose but your pools". I wonder how many of today's creative community would be prepared to risk even that?

● *Guilty by Suspicion* opens on 24 May

Synergetic

As prints and advertising costs, salary demands, back-end deals and so on go through the roof, nervous producers and studio executives are wondering where their next buck is coming from. Not from US banks, who almost without exception have pulled back from production financing.

Into the breach stepped the Japanese, fat with yen and hot for "synergy". With HDTV and digital filmmaking looming on the horizon – the latter will enable studios to elide the expensive and cumbersome distribution system (\$600 million in 1989) by sending picture perfect copies of movies to cinemas over telephone lines – Japanese electronic manufacturers are looking to marry hardware with software.

"Synergy" is the moral to be learned from Sony's Betamax fiasco and the reason it bought Columbia: to provide software for its hardware. "Not realising fully that people buy VCRs to get access to software, Sony pushed ahead on the hardware innovation side alone", said Sony chairman, Akita Morita, last summer. "Betamax had the technology, but the lack of software support is what made the difference in the end. Hardware and software synergy is fundamental – believe me, I know it now".

Japan is the biggest overseas market for Hollywood movies. Almost half the films released in Japan last year were made in the US. So Japanese investors have ample reason to search for Hollywood acquisitions.

Showers and trickles

According to *Variety*, over the last four years more than half of Japan's corporate largesse has been showered on entertainment properties. Not only did Sony (over)pay \$3 billion plus for Columbia Pictures and Matsushita fork out nearly twice as much for MCA, but JVC has financed Larry Gordon's Largo Entertainment movie company to the tune of \$100 million, a group of Japanese investors is helping producer Thom Mount with six films that will cost nearly \$100 million and another group has raised \$365 million for Disney. Nomura, Babcock & Brown is also giving a helping hand to Morgan Creek (and Disney), while still others have backed David Puttnam's Enigma.

But what many thought would be a gusher of cash may be dwindling to a trickle. Japanese banks have a lot of their money in real estate and the

Can the Japan-Hollywood axis remain intact, asks Peter Biskind?

Tokyo stock market, both of which took a beating last year.

So have the Japanese become weary with Hollywood? Yes and no. Many of the early deals haven't worked out as well as expected from the Japanese point of view. For example, NHK Enterprises, a branch of the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation, has had a problem with *Solar Crisis*, a \$25 million sci-fi pic from Boss Film in Los Angeles which is still looking for a distributor.

Satoru Iseki, CEO of Nippon Film Development & Finance, blamed a combination of unprofitable investments and the lawyer-intensive contracts *de rigueur* in Hollywood for discouraging Japanese investors. "I have no intention of bringing any investors into a project unless US firms share some of the risk", he said.

A new marriage

Then along came Disney. In the celebrated memo of Walt Disney Pictures chairman, Jeffrey Katzenberg, mentioned here last month, he suggested that the Japanese were out of their cultural depth in the movie industry. He argued that Sony's Betamax fell victim not to a lapse on the synergy front, but to a superior product marketed in a superior way, and that Matsushita bought MCA for no better reason than to keep up with the Sonys.

Katzenberg's scepticism, however, did not prevent Disney from rounding up some Japanese yen for itself. Historically the Disney team had been unusually creative in financing their pictures. Through Silver Screen I, II, and III, Disney had raised more than \$1 billion since 1985.

But according to Ron Grover's new book on Disney, Roland Betts, who ran Silver Screen, had become increasingly critical of some of Disney's deals. He refused to allow Silver Screen money to be used for *New York Stories*, where a big chunk of the potential profits went to the directors; *Stella*, for which the Samuel Goldwyn Company owned the foreign rights; *Arachnophobia*, for which Disney paid Steven Spielberg a princely sum to executive produce; and *Three Men and a Baby*, because the budget was too high.

Disney, for its part, may have felt the Silver Screen deal was too favourable to Silver Screen. The studio reportedly wanted to increase the 13 per cent overhead it charged Silver Screen for each of its productions and drop the requirement that Disney

reimburse the investors for those films that lost money.

Disney was offered better terms by the Japanese. According to the deal it signed with Touchwood Pacific Partners I, Disney is required to return only 6 per cent to investors and does not have to reimburse them for films that lose. The terms are reportedly such that the investors won't see any return on their money until most of the production and distribution costs on the films are met. According to Katzenberg, "The Silver Screen deal stands today as the best financial investment vehicle ever created for movies. We wanted to make Silver Screen V. But when somebody comes and offers better terms, I have an obligation to the investors to take them. And if our movies are successful, the Japanese will get a good return".

The Japanese deal, however, may have been too sweet to Disney. The business press reported that Yamaichi Securities Company, which agreed to find investors to put up \$191 million of the \$600 million package, had trouble delivering them, and had to put up \$100 million itself. But a well-placed source at Disney scoffs at the negative publicity around the deal, attributing it to grumbling by Yamaichi's competitors. "It was not that the deal was unattractive; it was the wrong time, the wrong market place", he says.

The next six months will be crucial because the early fruits of the Hollywood-Japan axis will reach the screen. Enigma's *Memphis Belle*, one of the first out, has performed beyond expectations, but this summer and autumn will see *Point Break* and *The Super* from Largo Entertainment, Enigma's next film, *Meeting Venus*, and *Indian Runner* (with Sean Penn acting and directing) from The Mount Company.

Despite a drastic reduction in the number and amount of loans to Hollywood by France's besieged Credit Lyonnais, many observers are now looking to Europe, buoyed by the opening of the common market in 1992, to step in where Japan fears to tread.

Still, it is too early to count the Japanese out. The rumour that Toshiba is a possible buyer for Paramount has resurfaced. As Tri-Star's head, Mike Medavoy, puts it, "At this point, there is no indication that the Japanese are more interested or less interested. If they have invested in the software business, it is because there is a future in the software business".

Future tense

The fifteen years since the Hong Kong International Film Festival was founded have seen great changes in the local film industry: the collapse of the old studio system, the rise and fall of a 'new wave', and a drastic reorganisation of production companies and distribution circuits. Against this backdrop, the HKIFF has helped to develop a cine-literate audience, to prompt a reform of the government's film classification policy, and to stimulate the opening of a number of art cinemas. Few other festivals can claim as much, and no other in Asia could expect to pull in full houses for Yvonne Rainer, the Taviani brothers and a Michael Powell retrospective.

With a new team of programmers (Li Cheud-To for International Cinema, Wong Ain-Ling for Asian Cinema and Law Kaw for the Hong Kong Cinema Retrospective), the fifteenth HKIFF boasted its strongest line-up in some years. There were tributes to Idrissa Ouedraogo and Aki Kaurismäki as well as seminars on special effects in Hong Kong movies and the changing international perception of Hong Kong cinema. Most foreigners who visit the festival come to see Chinese and other Asian films; they were rewarded this year with an adventurous mix of mainstream and independent movies from ten countries.

Breaking taboos

The title which stood out was the South Korean *Black Republic* (already a prizewinner at Nantes and Singapore). *Black Republic* says everything that circumspection forced director Park Kwang-Su to leave out of his debut feature *Chilsu and Mansu*. Set in the early 80s, soon after the Kwangju uprising and massacre, it's about a wanted activist who hides out in a decaying mining town where he runs into corrupt police, labour unrest, a disaffected prostitute and a hoodlum with a mother fixation. Park was the first Korean to move from Super-8 shorts to 35mm features without sacrificing his aesthetic and political integrity, and his example has opened up the ground for other new directors.

From China, Tian Zhuanghuang's *Li Lianying, the Imperial Eunuch* is probably the best film any director has managed to release under the increasingly hardline strictures of the Beijing Film Bureau. It covers ground well known from earlier Chinese movies (the declining years of the Qing

A cynical account of China's modern history and a portrait of a group of gay friends – two of the highlights of the marvellous Hong Kong Film Festival, reports Tony Rayns

dynasty and the struggle for power between the Empress Dowager, her puppet Emperor and her chief eunuch), but humanises the characters as never before. In a stupendous performance, Jiang Wen plays the eunuch as a creature neither male nor female, seeing the world as a projection of its own stunted desires.

From Japan, Kojima Yasushi's *Rough Sketch of a Spiral* is an engaging portrait of a group of gay friends and lovers in Osaka, centred on their involvement in a theatre piece about the situation of gay men. The film has little formal or stylistic elegance, but its intimacy and warmth are exemplary.

Probably enough, the comedian Katano Takeshi ("Beat" Takeshi) gets close to a comparable degree of taboo-busting in his second feature, *Boiling Point*, which shows a no-hoper from a gas station tangling with a powerful *yazuka* gang and coming out on top. Takeshi himself features as an Okinawan scoundrel who violently mistreats his girlfriend and buggers his best buddy for the hell of it. The film has the same off-the-wall character as its director, albeit masterfully timed and controlled.

Hong Kong itself has had a generally poor year for cinema. Fong Ling-Ching's *Kawashima Yoshiko* (about the bisexual spy last seen on screen sucking the toes of the Empress in *The Last Emperor*) is an admirably cynical account of China's modern history, miles from the usual historical and dramatic clichés. And Wong Kar-Wai's *Days of Being Wild* is a gorgeous evocation of Hong Kong in 1960, framed as a group portrait of six lost and frustrated young people. A second part, set in 1966, is promised for this year.

The festival closed with Ann Hui's latest film, *My American Grandson*. The



JAMES SULLIVAN

film is a transparently sincere, comic and mildly sentimental account of a spoiled and selfish Chinese-American brat parked with his grandfather in Shanghai for the summer; the generation gap pales beside the culture gap, but the two are finally reconciled. Hui did not originate the project, and obviously saw it as light relief after the autobiographical rigours of *Song of the Exile*, but directs it with her usual sensitivity and skill.

Power play

The powers that be in China, however, saw it very differently and brought heavy pressure on the Taiwanese producer to cut the film before supplying it to the festival. He reluctantly complied, removing one sequence in which the boy ridicules a school lesson about a "model revolutionary hero" and another showing a queue for a public toilet in Shanghai. Scriptwriter Wu Nianzhen introduced the film and told the audience that both he and Hui wanted their names to be taken off the cut version.

The audience first gasped, then groaned: another small and ominous indication of the way that China will honour its promise to leave Hong Kong alone in the years to come.

Festivals brief

● **Singapore International Film Festival** (22 March–7 April 1991) presented two prizes in the First Singapore Film Awards, with twelve Asian films competing (several of them already prizewinners, including China's *Black Snow* at Berlin). Young Asian directors were highlighted, particularly the Korean new wave (Park Kwang-Su's *Black Republic*, Huang Gyu Dok's *Searching for Our Class*). East meeting (or missing) West was a major theme in Shirley Sun's *Iron & Silk* (about an American in China), and *Lonely in America*,

directed by Barry Alexander Brown (editor of *Salaam Bombay* and *Do the Right Thing*), about Indians displaced in the US.
● **Tokyo International Film Festival** (27 September–6 October 1991) makes a special feature of its Young Cinema section, with fifteen films to be judged for gold, silver or bronze prizes, and cash grants of up to 20 million yen. Features from this year's Cannes 'Un Certain regard' section will also be shown here for the first time, together with a selection

of new Japanese and Asian films, a Fantastic Film Festival and International Women's Week.
● **Istanbul International Film Festival** (March 1992) features both an international competition section and a competitive Turkish cinema event. In 1991 there were commemorative events for the Hungarian director Zoltan Huszarik and for Jacques Tati. Guests of the 'Tribute' section were Carlos Saura, Margarethe von Trotta and Andrzej Wajda, a selection of whose work was shown.

Films drowned in elegance have become icons of Englishness. Cairns Craig explores the crisis these films dramatise and clothe

Imagine a film rich with scenes shot in Cambridge colleges and lush English countryside, set to an accompaniment of horse-drawn carriages with the occasional punctuation of bursts of steam at railway stations. This far from imaginary work is part of a cinematic genre which has had a remarkable prominence in the 80s: a 'genre which focuses on the English middle and upper classes at home and abroad before they were drowned by the flood of the First World War and the end of the Empire. Its source is often literary – and most often E. M. Forster.

And two new examples are currently under way: Charles Sturridge's adaptation of Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* had its world premiere as a Royal Charity Performance attended by the Princess of Wales at the end of May; *Howards End* is in production with Merchant/Ivory.

Indeed Merchant/Ivory – who also made the film adaptations of Forster's *A Room with a View* (1985) and *Maurice* (1987) – might claim to have originated the genre, though Sturridge and Derek Granger could equally assert that they established the territory back in 1981 with their television production of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. There is a certain incestuousness in these films. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Helena Bonham Carter again plays the repressed young English woman struggling with her desire to escape conformity that she played in *A Room with a View*. Rupert Graves, who plays the cowardly brother, was in *A Room with a View*, *Maurice* and Sturridge's adaptation

Rooms without a View

of Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* (1987). The same cast in the same period costumes gives the feel almost of a repertory production, with actors who know well each others' strengths and limitations and directors who know perhaps too well their audience's expectations.

But the writer toiling away at the script for the next adaptation should take heed – this genre is in danger of turning into a parody of itself. And perhaps the backers too should take note. It may be that the genre was viable only in the decade we have just left.

The dominance and success of this particular brand of film-making in the past ten years is symptomatic of the crisis of identity through which England passed during the Thatcher years. It is film as conspicuous consumption: the country houses, the panelled interiors, the clothes which have provided a good business for New York fashion houses selling English country style to rich Americans. Then there are all those shots of crystal decanters (Lucy Honeychurch carries two as she breaks off her engagement), of glasses glinting on silver salvers.

We are indulged with a perfection of style



designed to deny everything beyond the self-contained world the characters inhabit. The Italian lover in spotless white in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, for instance, would fit perfectly into the Cambridge world of *Maurice*; the unity of style denies the difference of culture. We feast vicariously on a luxuriant world in which whatever the turmoil of the characters' inner lives, the issue of affording a room is never in question, only the quality of its view.

The films also reflect the conflict of a nation committed to an international market place that diminishes the significance of Englishness and at the same time seeking to compensate by asserting 'traditional' English values, whether Victorian or provincial. If for an international audience, the England these films validate and advertise is a theme park of the past, then for an English audience they gratify the need to find points of certainty within English culture.

Forster and Waugh have proved popular because the world in which their works are set – the world just before film became the dominant modern medium, just before the modernist experiment in literature – is the last



Making a retreat: Helena Bonham Carter moves effortlessly from 'Where Angels Fear to Tread', left, to an advertisement for Wedgwood china, bottom. Both images draw us back into a secure and rich England – where we are invited to stay



great age of the English *haute bourgeoisie*. Here the death of inheritance that the plotlines assert (the death of the son in *A Handful of Dust*, the destruction of *Brideshead*, the death of Gino's baby in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the disappearance of the wife in *Heat and Dust*) is counteracted by the seeming permanence of the architecture, landscape and possessions that fill the screen. And it is this secure world of an earlier Englishness – the antithesis of the fissiparous relativism of the present – that the films recreate rather than what the novels acknowledge: that England must change, or has already changed beyond recognition.

Forster knew only too well that the life he described depended on £800 a year and that beyond it was an abyss which he did not understand and therefore could not write about. His narrator is always given an ironic awareness of the extent to which the spiritual concerns of the characters are dependent upon their financial security, but that sense is entirely elided in the films. In the film *Maurice* there are visual allusions to it (the porter scrubbing the stairs, for instance) but they do not disrupt the ►



◀ dominant iconography of the young men framed by Cambridge colleges. And in the end the middle-class hero, despite differences in class, education and wealth, is able to depart with the gamekeeper into a world whose difficulties – how are they going to survive? – the film does not even gesture towards.

The authenticity of these films to the literary is also fundamentally flawed in the relationship they set up between the historical and the contemporary. The audience is invited to understand the plot of the film as though we are *contemporary* with the characters, while at the same time indulging our pleasure in a world which is visually compelling precisely because of its *pastness*.

If these were films whose content was as much of today as yesterday, their translation into our own time would challenge us with the modernity of the issues raised. But they never do: instead we are placed back in a world whose evasions and silences are accepted as natural. The irony in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* is that the audience is invited to view the English tourists of the film in the same way as they view the

Italians, certain that, whatever is done to them, they will come out unchanged at the end. For example, Gino, who marries an English woman and then, after she has died in childbirth, loses his child because of the interference of her English relatives, will, we are assured, be laughing again tomorrow: the Italian are childlike, they do not take suffering seriously. And the audience plays a similar double game with the English characters: though their lives are caught up in dilemmas which demand our involvement, we are made aware that they are part of a world that has changed so much it doesn't matter any more.

Yet on another level these films elide this distance. *Where Angels Fear to Tread* ends with the two young English people (Bonham Carter and Graves) on the edge of some revelation, ready to accept some entirely new set of values. There is a close-up of their faces looking out at the audience, towards the future – a characteristic device in these films (*Maurice* concludes with a negative version of the same shot).

This encourages us to identify with them and so deny our historical knowledge of the

future they are facing. For though the issues with which the characters in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* are engaged may well, as Sturridge has said, be “love, fear, death, insincerity, a lack of truth and appreciation... as relevant tomorrow as yesterday and today”, we know that the revelation they are standing on the edge of is the First World War – a war that silenced Forster because it destroyed the secure world to which his comedy of manners was tied.

These are films in which the past is treated as though it existed in isolation from all that went before and after it, just as all those objects and possessions exist in isolation from any sense of grubby thing-making. (Who made them? Where? With how much sweat?) It is a cinema focused on a class that could pretend to be insulated from the world outside. In this it is very much in tune with our contemporary consumerist view of the world as a place in which objects exist only in acquisition, not in the labour of their creation.

“Only connect” was Forster’s theme in *Howards End*, and his stories are about trying to connect across cultural and class boundaries.



RONALD GRANT



Us and them: Are these our English contemporaries? Or is it precisely their pastness that attracts us? Caught up in crises of love, fear and death, they nevertheless belong to a world that has changed so much that it doesn't matter any more to us – and we are left free to indulge our pleasure in a perfection of style. Sturridge's 'A Handful of Dust', far left; Merchant/Ivory's 'Maurice', left; Sturridge's 'Brideshead Revisited', bottom



RONALD GRANT

But Forster's trite little phrase could only have come to have such weight because of the deep inhibition against communicating with other classes and cultures that had developed in middle-class England in the course of the nineteenth century.

English identity was threatened by anything which broke through its barriers, anything which suggested it was not autonomous and self-sustaining. As Forster comments on the Wilcoxes, the archetypal middle-class business people in *Howards End*: "Though presenting a

firm front to outsiders, no Wilcox could live near, or near the possessions of, any other Wilcox. They had the colonial spirit, and were always making for some spot where the white man might carry his burden unobserved".

The plots of these films show characters struggling to cross boundaries (across class in the homosexual relationship in *Maurice*; across cultures in the Italian films). But their effect is precisely the opposite: they situate us firmly in the barricaded room of an English identity from which the outside world is viewed from above and without, not engaged with. They take us back into a world for which 'others' (the Italians, the working class) may seem alluring in their apparent openness, but are always, in the end, proved to be both unstable and untrustworthy.

So the role of these outsiders becomes that of reinforcing the superiority of the characters the films initially mock. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, for instance, it is the stuffy English, prepared to make the passage across the boundaries of their culture, who are in the end seen as admirable, not the Italians already

liberated into a moral laxness that requires no journey to fulfilment.

This strategy of apparently satirising values which are in the end endorsed because everyone else's prove even more unacceptable is typical of the 80s. It is a game played by Tom Wolfe in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, where the upper-class WASP, whose essential emptiness the book and film set out to reveal, turns out to be the only worthwhile human being in a world of self-interested hypocrites.

In effect, these films engage with the *idea* of crossing the border between cultures, but in the knowledge that there is a safe haven to retreat into. They can allow their audiences to experience the tensions of an interrelatedness which contemporary British culture – *pace* Mrs Thatcher and the Bruges group – will have to live with, but within the profoundly safe context of the past. They can confront the need to build a new identity through open relations with other cultures only by reinforcing the values of a world which allowed its borders to be crossed one way only, at its own discretion and in the direction of its choice.

**Every
time
we say**

For Tamara and Tilda and Derek J

goodbye

From early Westerns to
Robert Bresson, cinema is
the true narrative art of the
century, argues John Berger

Film was invented a hundred years ago. During this time all over the world people have travelled on a scale that is unprecedented since the establishment of the first towns, when the nomads became sedentary. One might immediately think of tourism: business trips too, for the world market depends upon a continual exchange of products and labour. But, mostly, the travelling has been done under coercion. Displacements of whole populations. Refugees from famine or war. Wave after wave of emigrants: emigrating for either political or economic reasons, but emigrating for survival.

Ours is the century of enforced travel. I would go further and say that ours is the century of disappearances. The century of people helplessly seeing others, who were close to them, disappear over the horizon. 'Every Time We Say Good-Bye' – as immortalised by John Coltrane. Perhaps it is not so surprising that this century's own narrative art is the cinema.

In Padua there is a chapel that was built in the year 1300 on the site of a Roman arena. The chapel adjoined a palace that has now disappeared without a trace, as palaces often do. When the chapel was finished, Giotto and his assistants began painting frescoes all over the interior walls and ceiling. These have survived. They tell the story of the life of Christ and the Last Judgement. They show heaven, earth and hell.

When you are inside the chapel you are surrounded by the events depicted. The story line is very strong. The scenes are dramatic. (The one where Judas kisses Christ, for example, offers an unforgettable rendering of treachery.) Everywhere the expressions and gestures are charged with intense meaning – like those in silent films.


Giotto was a realist and a great *metteur-en-scène*. The scenes, which follow one after another, are full of stark material details, taken from life. This chapel, built and conceived 700 years ago, is, I think, more like a cinema than anything else that has come down to us from before the twentieth century. Somebody one day should name a cinema 'The Scrovegni' – which is how the chapel is called, after the family who had the palace built.

Nevertheless, there is a very obvious difference between cinema and painting. The cinema image moves and the painted image is static. And this difference changes our relationship to the *place* where we are looking at the images. In the Scrovegni you have the feeling that everything which has happened in history

has been brought there and belongs to an eternal present in the chapel in Padua. The frescoes – even those that have clearly deteriorated – inspire a sense of transcendental permanence.

The painted image makes what is absent – in that it happened far away or long ago – present. The painted image delivers what it depicts to the here and now. It collects the world and brings it home. A seascape by Turner may appear to contradict what I've just said. But even before a Turner the spectator remains aware of the pigment that has been scraped on to the canvas – and indeed this awareness is part of the excitement.

Turner comes out of the gale with a painting. Turner crosses the alps and brings *back* an image of nature's awesomeness. Infinity and the surface of the canvas play hide and seek in a room where a painting is hung. This is what I meant when I said painting collects the world and brings it home. And it can do this because its images are static and changeless.



Imagine a cinema screen being installed in the Scrovegni chapel and a film being projected on to it. Let's say the scene where the angel appears to the shepherds to announce Christ's birth at Bethlehem. (The legend has it that Giotto, when he was a boy, was a shepherd.) Watching this film, we would be transported *out* of the chapel to a field somewhere at night, where shepherds are lying in the grass. The cinema, because its images are moving, takes us *away* from where we are to the *scene of action*. ("Action!", murmurs or shouts the director to set the scene in motion.) Painting brings home. The cinema transports elsewhere.

Compare now the cinema with theatre. Both are dramatic arts. Theatre brings actors before a public and every night during the season they re-enact the same drama. Deep in the nature of theatre is a sense of ritual return.

The cinema, by contrast, transports its audience individually, singly, *out* of the theatre towards the unknown. Twenty takes of the same scene may be shot, but the one that is used will be selected because it has the most convincing look and sound of a First Time. Where, then, do these First Times take place? Not, of course, on the set. *On* the screen? The screen, as soon as the lights go out, is no longer a surface but a space. Not a wall, as the walls of the Scrovegni chapel, but more like a sky filled with events and people. From where else would film stars come if not from a film sky?

The scale and grain of the cinema screen enhance the sky effect. This is why cinema films shown on small TV screens lose so much of their sense of destiny. The meetings are no longer in a sky but in a kind of cupboard.

At the end of a play, the actors, abandoning the characters they have been playing, come to the footlights to take their bow. The applause they receive is a sign of recognition for their having brought the drama into the theatre tonight. At the end of a film, those protagonists, who are still alive, have to move on. We have been following them, stalking them, and, finally, out there, they have to elude us. Cinema is perpetually about leaving. "If there is an aesthetics of the cinema", said René Clair, "it can be summarised in one word: movement". One word: movies.

Maybe this is why so many couples, when they go to the cinema, hold hands, as they don't in the theatre. A response to the dark, people say. Perhaps a response to the travelling, too. Cinema seats are like those in jet planes.

When we read a story, we inhabit it. The covers of a book are like a roof and four walls. What is to happen next will take place within the four walls of the story. And this is possible because the story's voice makes everything its own. *Film is too close to the real* to be able to do this. And so it has no home ground. It is always coming and going. In a story which is read, suspense simply involves waiting. In a film it involves displacement.

To show that it is in the very nature of film to shuttle us between a here and a there, let us think of Bresson's first masterpiece – *Un Condamné à mort s'est échappé*. Watching it, we scarcely ever leave the prisoner, Fontaine, who is either in his cell or in the exercise yard. Meticulously, step by step, we follow him preparing for his escape. The story is told in a very linear way, like one of the ropes Fontaine is making to escape with. It must be one of the most unilinear films ever made.

Yet all the while, on the soundtrack, we hear the guards in the prison corridors and on the staircases, and, beyond, the sound of trains passing. (How much the cinema was in love with locomotives.) We remain *here* with Fontaine in his cell; but our imagination is being pulled to *there*, where the guards are doing their rounds, or to *there*, where men at liberty can still take trains. Continually we are made aware of an elsewhere. This is part of the inevitable method of film narration. The only way around it would be to shoot a whole ►

◀ story in one take and with a camera that didn't move. And the result would be a photocopy of theatre – without the all-important presence of the actors. Movies, not because we see things moving, but because a film is a shuttle service between different places and times.

In early Westerns there are those classic chase scenes in which we see a train and men on horses galloping beside it. Sometimes a rider succeeds in leaving his horse and pulling himself aboard the train. This action, so beloved by directors, is the emblematic action of cinema. All film stories use cross-overs. Usually they occur not on the screen as an event, but as the consequence of editing. And it is through these cross-overs that we are made to feel the destiny of the lives we are watching.

When we read, it is the story's voice which conveys a sense of destiny. Films are much nearer to the accidents of life, and in them destiny is revealed in the split second of a cut or the few seconds of a dissolve. These cuts, of course, are not accidental: we know that they are *intended* by the film – they reveal how the film is hand-in-glove with the destiny working in the story. The rest of the time this destiny is lurking elsewhere, in the sky behind.

It may seem that, eighty years after Griffiths and Eisenstein, I'm simply saying that the secret of the Seventh Art is editing. My argument, however, concerns not the making of films, but how they work, when made, on the spectator's imagination. Walt Whitman, who was born at the end of the Napoleonic age and died two years before the first reels were shot, foresaw our cinematographic vision. His intensely democratic sense of human destiny made him the poet of the cinema before the cameras were made:

The little one sleeps in its cradle,
I lift the gauze and look a long time, and
silently brush away flies with my hand.
The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside
up the bushy hill,
I peeringly view them from the top.
The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the
bedroom,
I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair,
I note where the pistol has fallen.

Song of Myself Section 8

Film narration has another unique quality. The French critic Lucien Sève once said that a film

shot offers scarcely more explanations than reality itself, and from this arises its enigmatic power to "cling to the surface of things". André Bazin wrote: "Cinema is committed to communicate only by way of what is real". Even as we wait to be transported elsewhere, we are held fascinated by the *presence* of what has come towards us out of the sky. The most familiar sights – a child sleeping, a man climbing a staircase – become mysterious when filmed. The mystery derives from our closeness to the event and from the fact that the filmed event still retains a multiplicity of possible meanings. What we are being shown has, at one and the same time, something of the focus, the intentionality of art, and the unpredictability of reality.

Directors such as Satyajit Ray, Rossellini, Bresson, Buñuel, Forman, Scorsese, Spike Lee have used non-professional actors precisely in order that the people we see on the screen may be scarcely more *explained* than reality itself. Professionals, except for the greatest, usually play not just the necessary role, but an explanation of the role.

Films which are null and void are so not because of their trivial stories, but because there is nothing else but story. All the events they show have been tailor-made for the story and have no recalcitrant body to them. There are no real surfaces to cling to. Paradoxically, the more familiar the event, the more it can surprise us. The surprise is that of re-discovering the world (a child asleep, a man, a staircase) after an absence elsewhere. The absence may have been very brief, but in the sky we lose our sense of time. Nobody has used this surprise more crucially than Tarkovsky. With him we come back to the world with the love and caring of ghosts who left it.

No other narrative art can get as close as the cinema does to the variety, the texture, the skin of daily life. But its unfolding, its coming into being, its marriage with the elsewhere, remind us of a longing, or a prayer.

Fellini asks: "What is an artist? A provincial who finds himself somewhere between a physical reality and a metaphysical one. Before this metaphysical reality we are all of us provincial. Who are the true citizens of transcendence? The Saints. But it's this in-between that I'm calling a province, this frontier country between the tangible world and the intangible one – which is really the realm of the artist".

Ingmar Bergman says: "Film as dream, film as music. No art passes our conscience in the

way film does, and goes directly to our feelings, deep down into the dark rooms of the soul".

From the beginning, the cinema's talent for inventing dreams was seized upon. This faculty of the medium is why cinema industries have often become *dream factories*, in the most pejorative sense of the term, producing soporifics.

Nevertheless there is no film that does not partake of dream. And the great films are dreams which reveal. No two moments of revelation are the same. *The Gold Rush* is very different from *Pather Panchali*. Nevertheless I want to ask the question: what is the longing that film expresses and, at its best, satisfies? What is the nature of this filmic revelation?

Film stories, as we have seen, inevitably place us in an elsewhere, where we cannot be at home. Once again the contrast with television is revealing. TV focuses on its audience being at home. Its serials and soap operas are all based on the idea of a *home from home*. In the cinema, by contrast, we are travellers. The protagonists are strangers to us. It may be hard to believe this, since we often see these strangers at their most intimate moments, and since we may be profoundly moved by their story. Yet no individual character in a film do we *know* – as we know, say, Julien Sorel, or Macbeth, Natasha Rostova, or Tristram Shandy. We cannot get to know them, for the cinema's narrative method means that we can only encounter them, not live with them. We meet in a sky where nobody can stay.

How then does the cinema overcome this limitation to attain its special power? It does so by celebrating what we have in common, what we share. The cinema longs to go beyond individuality.

Think of *Citizen Kane*, the story of an arch-individualist. At the beginning of the story he dies, and the film tries to put together the puzzle of who he really was. It turns out that he was multiple. If we are eventually moved by him, it is because the film reveals that somewhere Kane might have been a man like any other. As the film develops, it dissolves his individuality. *Citizen Kane* becomes a co-citizen with us.

The same is not true of the hero of Ibsen's play *The Master Builder* or of Prince Myshkin in Dostoevsky's novel. In *Death in Venice*, Thomas Mann's Aschenbach dies discreetly, privately; Visconti's Aschenbach dies publicly and theatrically, and the difference is not merely the result of Visconti's choices but of the medium's narrative need. In the written version we *follow*

Aschenbach, who retires like an animal to die in hiding. In the film version Bogarde comes towards us and dies in close-up. In his death he approaches us.

When reading a novel we often identify ourselves with a given character. In poetry we identify ourselves with the language itself. Cinema works in yet another way. Its alchemy is such that the characters come to identify themselves with us. It is the only art in which this can happen.

Take the old-age pensioner, Umberto D, in De Sica's masterpiece of that name. He has been made anonymous by age, indifference, poverty, homelessness. He has nothing to live for and he wants to kill himself. At the end of the story, only the thought of what will happen to his dog prevents him from doing so. But by now this nameless man has, for us, come to represent life. Consequently, his dog becomes an obscure hope for the world. As the film unfolds, Umberto D begins to *abide* in us. The biblical term defines with surprising precision how De Sica's film – and any successful narrative film – has to work. Heroes and heroines, defeated or triumphant, come out of the sky to abide in us. At this moment elsewhere becomes everywhere.

Umberto D comes to abide in us because the film reminds us of all the reality that we potentially share with him, and because it discards the reality which distinguishes him from us, which has made him separate and alone. The film shows what happened to the old man in life and, in the showing, opposes it. This is why film – when it achieves art – becomes like a human prayer. Simultaneously, a plea and an attempt to redeem.

The star system too, in a paradoxical way, is dependent upon sharing. We know very well that a star is not just the actor. The latter merely serves the star – often tragically. The star always has a different and mythic name. The star is a figure accepted by the public as an archetype. This is why the public enjoys and recognises a star playing, relatively undisguised, many different roles in different films. The overlapping is an advantage, not a hindrance. Each time the star pulls the role, pulls the character in the film story, towards her or his archetype.

The difficulty of labelling the archetypes should not encourage us to underestimate their importance. Take Laurel and Hardy. They form a couple. Because they do so, women are marginal in their stories. Laurel quite often

dresses up as a woman. Both of them – in their sublime comic moments – have certain habitual gestures which are distinctly 'effeminate'. So why is it that they do not register in the public imagination as homosexual? It is because, archetypally, Laurel and Hardy are kids – somewhere between the ages of seven and eleven. The public imagination perceives them as kid wreckers of an adult world order. And therefore, given their archetype age, they are not yet sexual beings. It is thanks to their archetype that they are not sexually labelled.

Finally, let's return to the fact that film pulls us into the visible world: the one into which we are thrown at birth and which we all share. Painting does not do this; it interrogates the visible. Nor does still photography – for all still photographs are about the past. Only movies pull us into the present and the visible, the visible which surrounds us all. Film doesn't have to say *tree*: it can show a tree. It doesn't have to describe a crowd: it can be in one. It doesn't have to find an adjective for mud; it can be up to the wheels in it. It doesn't have to analyse a face, it can approach one. It doesn't have to lament, it can show tears.

Here is Whitman, prophetically imagining the screen image as it addresses the public:

Translucent mould of me it shall be you!
Shaded ledges and rests it shall be you!
Firm masculine colter it shall be you!
Whatever goes to the tilth of me it shall
be you!
You my rich blood! your milky stream pale
strippings of my life!
Breast that presses against other breasts it
shall be you!
My brain it shall be your occult convolutions!
Root of wash'd sweet-flag! timorous pond-
snipe! nest of guarded duplicate eggs!
it shall be you!
Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it
shall be you!
Trickling sap of maple, fibre of manly wheat,
it shall be you!
Sun so generous it shall be you!
Vapors lighting and shading my face it shall
be you!

Song of Myself Section 24

Most films, of course, do not achieve universality. Nor can the universal be consciously pursued – for such an ambition leads only to

pretension or rhetoric. I have been trying to understand the modality of how cinema occasionally bestows universality upon a filmmaker's work. Usually it is in response to love or compassion. At such moments cinema does something complicated in a more simple way than any other art can. Here are two examples.

In Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante* a sailor marries a peasant girl. We see the couple come out of church at the end of a joyless, almost sinister, ceremony, with all the men dressed in black, intimidated by the priest, and with old women whispering scandal. Then the sailor takes his wife home to his barge on a river. She is swung aboard on a yardarm by the crew, which consists of a kid and an old man. The *Atalante* casts off and sails away on its long journey to Paris. Perhaps it is dusk. The bride, still in white, slowly walks the length of the barge towards the prow. Alone, she is being borne away and she walks solemnly, as if to another altar. On the bank a woman with a child sees her passing down the river, and she crosses herself as if she has just seen a vision. And she has. She has seen at that moment a vision of every bride in the world.

In the *Mean Streets* of Martin Scorsese, a gang of neighbourhood friends put up daily, makeshift shelters against the flames. They do this separately and together. The flames are those of hell. The shelters are: wisecracks, shoot-outs, whiskeys, memories of innocence, a windfall of a hundred bucks, a new shirt. New York Italian Catholics, they know about Jesus, but here, on the East Side, there is no redemption; everyone is on the back of everyone, trying not to sink down into the pit. Charlie is the only one capable of bullshit pity, though he can save nobody. Driving away from yet another fight, he says out loud: "I know things haven't gone well tonight, Lord, but I'm trying". And, in that instant, which is buried in the shit of Manhattan, he becomes the repentant child in all of us and a soul in Dante's Hell – Dante, whose vision of the *Inferno* was modelled after the cities he knew in his time.

What is saved in the cinema when it achieves art is a spontaneous continuity with all of mankind. It is not an art of the princes or of the bourgeoisie. It is popular and vagrant. In the sky of the cinema people learn what they might have been and discover what belongs to them apart from their single lives. Its essential subject – in our century of disappearances – is the soul, to which it offers a global refuge. This, I believe, is the key to its longing and its appeal.



Nostalgia or a fresh beginning? Bryant Weeks, in Pupi Avati's 'Bix', premiered in Cannes; the lost innocence of Giuseppe Tornatore's 'Cinema Paradiso' (1988), opposite

Does the success of
'Cinema Paradiso' and
'Noi Tre' mean Italian
cinema is thriving again?
Italian critic Morando
Morandini gives
a measured answer

Paradiso lost



I consider the 80s to have been the most stupid decade in the history of Italy this century. And Italian cinema has been a mirror of this stupidity (for stupid, read corrupt, rotten, vulgar, conformist). My feelings towards Italian cinema are of the same hopelessly contradictory nature as those I harbour towards the country in which I was born, grew up and whose language I speak. In the words of Leonardo Sciascia, "Italy hurts me".

A glance at market figures for the past ten years could lead us to the conclusion that Italian cinema no longer exists. Nowadays people just make films, which is not the same thing. According to the figures, 117 films were produced in Italy in 1989, but only eighty-nine were distributed. The figures for 1990 show that just over 100 films were produced and less than eighty distributed.

But the truth is that even those films said to be distributed often reached only a handful of the major cities, after which they disappeared. A few lucky ones reappeared on TV, but hardly ever during peak time. Out of the eighty-nine Italian films distributed in 1989, thirty-six were shown in fewer than five cities. We may as well add these ghost films to the 'invisible' films not distributed at all save at festivals.

Seven Italians in ten never go to the cinema, which is more or less the same figure as in the rest of Europe. But of the 30 per cent who do go, few go to see Italian films. Between 1969 and 1989 box-office receipts for Italian films dropped from 60.6 per cent to 23.1 per cent of total ticket sales. Between 70 and 80 per cent of box-office receipts are for US films.

In the meantime, however, Italian films are back in fashion abroad. After winning at

Cannes, Giuseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso* (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*, 1988) went on to receive an Oscar and was successfully distributed on the US market. Maurizio Nichetti's *The Icicle Thief* (*Ladri di saponette*, 1989) took first prize at the Moscow Film Festival and was sold to the USSR, to several ex-socialist countries and to Japan. At the 41st Filmfestspiele in Berlin this February, Marco Ferreri's *House of Smiles* (*La casa del sorriso*) carried off a Golden Bear and Marco Bellocchio's *The Sentence* (*La condanna*) a Silver Bear, while Ricky Tognazzi was voted best director for his second film behind the lens, *Ultrà*.

Yet international praise did not bring with it domestic success. Nichetti's *The Icicle Thief* flopped in Italy, as did Gianni Amelio's *Open Doors* (*Porte aperte*). Even *Cinema Paradiso* had to wait for a win at Cannes and an Oscar before it found its public in Italy, and then its success was largely due to the tenacity of its producer, Franco Cristaldi, who achieved the rare feat of keeping it on the circuit for three seasons.

Perhaps it is hardly surprising that young Italian film-makers of the 80s seem to have been afflicted by anaemia. There were over 100 directing debuts made during the decade, most of them state-funded through the Credito Cinematografico of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. But even bearing in mind the low budgets that condition such projects, lack of money cannot be entirely responsible for a malady that has come to seem so much part of normality.

This anaemia manifests itself in many ways. One is a tendency towards insipid niceness – films with a certain washed-out charm that analyse family or everyday life with microscopic realism and more or less nostalgic intimism. Films in this minimalist vein are

characterised by a rediscovery of the well-constructed screenplay, tightly written dialogue and evocation by means of sketches or impressions. Most of its exponents are young Romans or adopted Romans – film buffs with halfbaked cultural notions and short memories who want to do a Wim Wenders or Jim Jarmusch but end up instead producing rehashed commercial versions of their idols' work, with the addition of a few spiritless gags of their own.

Then there's the cult of the sublime – films which grapple with the great abstract and metaphysical themes, often propped up by bad literature or crass readings of good literature. To this tendency belong those directors who have pretensions to become auteurs. If these film-makers take up the malaise of youth, then it's in existential terms, not as a confrontation with social issues such as unemployment.

And then there's the legacy of the 70s. This has taken the form of a mania for art films and an overrating of the demi-god status of the director. Young film-makers in this mould write their own screenplays and treat the actors as mere accessories, with predictably laughable results. The disastrous De Sica section at the Venice Film Festival has for many years provided an eloquent showcase for such empty ambitions.

Only three directors, all of them over forty, have worked continuously and coherently throughout the 80s, and even they have had to alternate between film, television and documentary work. They are Gianni Amelio, Pupi Avati and Giuseppe Bertolucci.

Amelio came to fame with *Open Doors*, which won the 1990 European Film Award. His ►

◀ *Blow to the Heart* (*Colpire al cuore*, 1982) was one of the few Italian films – and the best, along with Giuseppe Bertolucci's *Secrets Secrets* (*Segreti-segreti*, 1984) – to confront the subject of terrorism. Few Italian film-makers can match Amelio in portraying the psychology of childhood and adolescence.

The films of Pupi Avati, now in his early fifties, are animated by two figures – the bizarre Bolognese with a taste for excess and provocation and the man disposed to good sentiments, a disenchanted nostalgic who worships the landscape and the past. In his *Story of Boys and Girls* (*Storia di ragazzi e ragazze*, 1989), one of the best Italian films of the 1989/90 season, he effects a reconciliation between these two principles. Avati's latest film, *Bix*, has recently been shown at Cannes.

The work of Giuseppe Bertolucci, long in the shadow of big brother Bernardo, has to date been greeted with critical but not public acclaim. Bertolucci has successfully combined fiction with investigative documentaries, his best work perhaps being *Panni sporchi*, produced for the 1980 electoral campaign of the Italian Communist Party as part of a series of portraits of Italian cities. Bertolucci chose to film Milan, or rather the microcosm of the city, its main railway station with its population of drop-outs, drug addicts, prostitutes, homeless and drunks. The result was a fine anthropological documentary in which the virtues of early neo-realism are wedded with *cinéma vérité* to produce an elegant but rigorous *mise en scène*.

In the field of comedy some of the most innovative work has been done by Nanni Moretti. Born in 1953, he is one of a group of actor-writers who in the 70s and 80s attempted a revival of that mainstay of the Italian cinema industry: *la commedia all'italiana*.

Moretti is a humourist, not a comic, and his work seems closer to that of the young film-makers of the 60s than to his contemporaries. Shot through with a pervasive sense of melancholy, of restless questioning and relentless moralism, his comedies seem to get progressively blacker. His ironic yet affectionate concern with urban youth and rejection of vulgarity are played out using non-traditional narrative techniques through characters who are paradoxical, troubled, brimful of problems: the cruel moralism of the killer/teacher of *Blanca* (1984); the powerless inner-city priest of *The Mass is Over* (*La messa è finita*, 1985); the self-doubting, intellectual athlete of *Red Lob* (*Palombella rossa*, 1989).

Maurizio Nichetti made his first feature film *Ratatplan* in 1979 on a tiny budget. Combining lessons from silent films and the mimed buffoonery of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition with the fast-action technique of the cartoon idiom, it was an extraordinary box-office success. Nichetti made a comeback some ten years later with *The Icicle Thief*, an enjoyable fairy tale which is also a serious examination of aspects of consumer society and the entertainment business. Nichetti's next film, *Wishing to Fly* (*Volere volare*, 1991), is an Italian *Roger Rabbit* in which the protagonist, a dubber of old Ameri-



High hopes: Maurizio Nichetti, star and director of 'The Icicle Thief', top; Giuseppe Tornatore, director of 'Cinema Paradiso', above

can cartoons, gradually changes into a cartoon character himself. In this "love story with technical complications" Nichetti explores again some of his favourite themes: work, love, the plight of youth, the mass media.

In a moment of optimism some time ago, I wrote that the 90s began for Italian cinema in 1988 when, among other things, *Cinema Paradiso* was released. Critics have subsequently split into two camps about the work of the film's thirty-five-year-old director, Sicilian Giuseppe Tornatore, especially after his disappointing third film, *Everybody's Fine* (*Stanno tutti bene*, 1990). Tornatore's detractors accuse his work of bad faith in its depiction of an Italy specially packaged for export. To me, he is a first-class narrator, the natural heir to Sergio Leone, though his style is marked more by sentiment, emotion and dreams.

The 80s was a decade in which political commitment went out of fashion. Few films attempted to deal with the problems society was encountering in those years: the collapse of ideologies, the ascendancy of organised crime, political corruption, environmental pollution and the breakdown of public services. One of the first voices to be raised was that of Carlo Mazzacurati, an exact contemporary of Tornatore, with his narrative film *Italian Night* (*Notte italiana*, 1987), produced by Moretti's company, Sacher.

Italian Night describes the society of the Po delta – a region explored on film by Antonioni – as it faces up to civil disintegration and corruption. In similar vein, Marco Risi's *Forever Mary* (*Mery per sempre*, 1989) chronicles the

lives of the inmates of a Palermo reformatory, while *Street Boys* (*Ragazzi fuori*, 1990) takes up the boys' stories on their release – a tale of poverty, ignorance, unemployment, family disruption and bad company set in one of Italy's most degenerate and violent big cities. *Tomato* (Pummarò, 1990), the directing debut of popular actor Michele Placido, tackles for the first time the theme of Italy's African immigrants. And in Ricky Tognazzi's *Ultrà* (1991), the themes of hooliganism and football violence are confronted with an energy and passion that seem to condone what the film shows.

While Risi's and Tognazzi's films retain more than a hint of the *commedia all'italiana* tradition and of lessons drawn from US cinema, Silvio Soldini cultivates a cinema distantly modelled on the austerity of Robert Bresson and the *esprit de géométrie* of Erich Rohmer. The precision with which Soldini – originally a documentary film-maker – inserts the underlying sociological reality of situations and behaviour into the fictional narrative seems to me to be the most original feature of *L'aria serena dell'Ovest* (1990), a lucid portrayal of the Milanese bourgeoisie.

This panorama of recent Italian cinema would not be complete without mention of two interesting phenomena: the advent of a new generation of screenplay writers, and the improvement in the level of acting, thanks largely to a new contingent of young actors, most of whom have a background in theatre. Much of the credit for Risi's last two films is due to the screenplays of Aurelio Grimaldi, a young Sicilian who turned his own experiences as a teacher to brilliant use; Tognazzi's films *Little Misunderstandings* (*Piccoli equivoci*, 1988) and *Ultrà* (1991) both started out as plays. This recourse to the theatre is not simply an easy option, but has to do with a search for fresh dramatic force and a desire to give more considered attention to the role of the actor. And the new generation of actors has brought to film a solid craftsmanship and engagement with the audience, both qualities unknown in the previous decade.

A number of films have appeared within the independent and semi-independent sectors over the past three years that deserve to reach a more international audience. Franco Piavoli, a retired teacher, has continued to pursue his ideal of a poetic, intellectually intense cinema with *Nostos – Il ritorno* (1989). Nico D'Alessandria's *L'imperatore di Roma* (1988), set in Pasolini's squalid Roman hinterland, is a hyper-realist portrait of a homeless, mentally ill drug addict, shot in a livid black and white that makes no concessions to aestheticism.

La rosa blu, a film on the border between fiction and documentary shot in the women's wing of a Turin prison by the collective Camera Woman, but in effect directed by Emanuela Piovano, is the best film about prison life to be made in Italy. And among the numerous women who have made their directing debut recently, particular mention should be made of the Milanese Adriana Monti, who in *Gentili signore* (1988) recounts with rough-edged preci-

Pupi Avati

Why should an Italian director make a film about Bix Beiderbecke, asks John Francis Lane?

The commitment of Italian film-makers to provincial life is a familiar story. But with the notable exception of Olmi, directors have taken the train to Rome, where they have made their careers.

Pupi Avati, now finally being recognised as a major Italian film-maker, is different; he has retained his provincial allegiance. And this emerges even in his latest film, *Bix*, shot in English and filmed entirely on location in the US. Premiered this May at Cannes, *Bix* was co-scripted by Lino Patruno, Avati and his brother, Antonio, and produced through the Avati production company – a sort of family workshop.

The film is described by Avati as “an interpretation of the legend” of the white jazz cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, who died of pneumonia (and alcoholism) in New York in 1931, at the age of twenty-eight. Avati began a love affair with jazz at the age of seven, when US troops came to liberate his native Bologna. Later he became determined to become a jazz musician himself: he played the clarinet and with a group of friends formed the Rheno Jazz Gang. But after marrying in 1964 and realising he would never be another Benny Goodman, he felt obliged to take a regular job – with a frozen food firm.

In that same year Avati had a revelation which he compares to an aunt's ‘miracle’ cure after a visit to a holy shrine. Although he had always loved movies, when he saw Fellini's 8½ it changed his life: he immediately wanted to become a film-maker. “I wanted to make that sort of film”, Avati recalls. What he meant was a film full of fantasy and dreams, the sort of film that had liberated him.

But how does a frozen food factory employee in Bologna set about making films? He sends letters and script treatments to the offices of Roman film producers. “The only reply I received was from Dino De Laurentiis”, remembers Avati, “but nothing ever came of it. Still, as he had produced *La Strada*, I felt a bit of encouragement”.

At around this time Marco

Bellocchio, a young provincial from Piacenza, made a film called *Fists in the Pocket* (*I pugni in tasca*). It was a co-operative venture shot on a shoestring budget, with out-of-work actor Enzo Doria as producer. “Why shouldn't we do the same thing?”, asked Avati.

So in much the same way as he had formed his jazz band, he got together a group of friends and in 1968, while political turmoil was raging in most of Europe (and not least in ‘red’ Bologna), Pupi Avati made his first film, *Balsamus, the Man of Satan* (*Balsamus l'uomo di satana*), which he describes as a “gothic horror movie”. It was a flop, despite the attention of a few critics. (It later became a ‘cult movie’.) “My second film, *Thomas the Possessed* (*Thomas... Gli indemoniati*), also very gothic, was an even bigger flop”, says Avati. “It was never even released”.

That was the turning point. Avati decided he had to go to Rome – or face the frozen food business for the rest of his life. It took him four years to make his next film, which he achieved largely thanks to an interest in the script by Ugo Tognazzi, then a big star, who agreed to play in it. A historical fantasy, *The Mazurka of the Baron* (*La mazurka del barone*, 1974) did well enough at the box office to establish Avati's professional status in the eyes of the Roman film industry.

Avati went on to make several other films as well as a three-part mini-series for television titled *Jazz Band*, whose subject was those years in Bologna when he aspired to be Benny Goodman.

Jazz Band was a success with television audiences: “I felt I was communicating with kids twenty years younger than me, who were as I had been. Most of

my films from then on have been inspired by the world I remember from my early years – either things that happened to me or stories I heard from family and friends”.

Even *Us Three* (*Noi Tre*), the film about the fourteen-year-old Mozart's trip to Bologna which won Avati international recognition, had its inspiration in the director's life. “*Us Three* was one of my most personal films. As was to happen with *Bix*, it required a lot of research. But the Pallavicini villa where Mozart stayed when he came to take an exam at the Bologna Conservatoire was next door to our garden”.

And the autobiographical dimension of *Bix*? “I remember when I was a child, in bed with scarlet fever, my mother brought me some books from the local library and one of these was about jazz. In it I read the story of Bix, this young American from Davenport, Iowa, who became famous playing with Paul Whiteman's band. I was fascinated by his story and his tragic death at such a young age. It is a legend I have carried with me all these years”.

It is difficult to resist the speculation that Avati identifies with Bix's struggle to be loyal to his family roots and yet to realise his ambitions as an artist. “Yes, it's something very Italian, I suppose, but then maybe any young man brought up in a provincial environment could identify with that kind of conflict. I may not have taken part in the political ferment in Bologna when most young people were on the barricades, but my passion for jazz was in itself a form of revolt”.

“In Bix's case, his father, a rigid conformist, did not want him to be a jazz player. It was sinful, to say the least”, Avati explains. “So that's why we tell the story as a search for the truth that the Beiderbecke family wants to uncover. It is no coincidence that the friend who helps the family, Joe Venuti, is an Italian-American. And even the girl who poses as Bix's fiancée in New York is from an Italian family. These touches are not to justify our telling the story through Italian eyes, but they do show our interest in the conflict between a family and its prejudices and an individual with an artistic temperament”.

Even when in Chicago or Davenport, Iowa, Pupi Avati retains his identity as an Italian provincial.

sion the story of a group of women working collectively on a film in which, for once, men are relegated to a secondary role.

This survey has deliberately omitted the work of those directors who made Italian cinema great, one reason being that they deserve separate discussion. In various ways, however, they too have succumbed to the general depression of the 80s. Ill health and old age have reduced Antonioni to silence; Sergio Leone suffered an untimely death on the eve of shooting a film about the siege of Leningrad, a project he had been working on for years.

The last film Bernardo Bertolucci made in Italy was *The Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man* (*La tragedia di un uomo ridicolo*, 1981), while the past masters of the *commedia all'italiana* – Comencini, Monicelli and Dino Risi – are either in retirement or taking a well-deserved rest. Scola has trod an uneven path, his latest film of any worth being *The Family* (*La famiglia*, 1986); the Taviani brothers have taken refuge in the past, indulging in academicism, albeit of a high-class variety. Only Ferreri, in *House of Smiles*, has shown anything like his old form.

This rather discouraging scenario must be viewed in the context of Italy's unique situation. It is a country that holds many records, among which are the world record for the highest number of films broadcast annually on TV (more than 5,000 a year among the eight principal networks); the world record outside the US for the highest number of local TV stations (670 altogether, although many lead a precarious and in some cases practically nominal existence); and the European record for the nation that spends most on importing TV programmes from abroad.

It also holds the European record for the nation which in the 80s recorded the biggest drop in cinema audiences (almost 60 per cent compared with a European average of just over 40 per cent). The responsibility for this situation lies above all with the politicians, who have failed to update the 1965 law on the cinema which helped to sustain indigenous and quality cinema, and who since the ending of the state broadcasting monopoly in 1976, have not lifted a finger to help bridge the legislative vacuum that has ensued.

Then there is the intensive de-literacy programme conducted by both state and private TV networks, with their lunatic pursuit of viewing figures no matter what the qualitative cost. And, of course, the rapid spread of that mass-cultural syphilis of this particular end of century – advertising.

As far as the cinema is concerned, the future has already arrived in the form of the existing TV duopoly (RAI and Fininvest), which in the last few years has financed 80 per cent of all films produced nationally. The stylistic conformity and thematic homogeneity – the anaemia described above – is a direct consequence of this sort of TV financing.

But the end of the tunnel is in sight: 1992 should see the introduction of regulatory laws on broadcasting and the cinema. Meanwhile, the show must go on.



'Bix' and his Italian connection: Pupi Avati

Citizen Kael

Funny, smart, a true cultural democrat:

From Mark Twain to Elvis, the most distinctly US art has been uncouth, not so much because it was crude (though it could be, or seem so) but because it lacked a pedigree. Yet the cultural mandarins of the US – generally self-appointed (they, too, have no pedigree) – have always yearned for a culture that's more defined as well as more refined, one in which the art they like will be treated not only as valuable, but as superior.

But when such elitism is in disarray, as during the 60s when intellectuals discovered pop culture or again in the Reagan years when the right wing did, what replaces it is no less prejudicial. When they're in the saddle, pop and pulp enthusiasts give the impression of simply wanting to sweep away all those fuddy-duddy European yardsticks so that we can all party down in the garbage. What's almost always been missing from the dialogue, or rather from the two monologues, is a flexible, independent-minded pluralism that responds to different kinds of merit without feeling obliged to rank them.

This is why Pauline Kael's importance extends far beyond her writings about movies. It also helps to explain the uniqueness of her role, not only in film criticism, but in the history of American letters.

Kael began writing movie reviews in the mid-50s – the decade that, to judge by our unflagging fascination (both nostalgic and polemic) for it, may come to typify this century for Americans, much as people commonly use 1750 or 1789 as shorthand for the entire eighteenth century. The conformity and dreariness of those years may be largely a matter of appearance, since under the surface, in a variety of places, all sorts of interestingly scurrilous things were going on.

But the ways in which culture was interpreted during this period could not have been more conventional. Academic categories ruled discussion of the arts; pop was dismissed or denounced. So far as movies went, the only alternative to the mediocrity of the daily reviewers was the auteur criticism favoured by *Village Voice* and the specialist film magazines, whose adherents mimicked European models to give their opinions stature. In such a landscape open-mindedness can take on an embattled character and common sense can sound cantankerous, unfair and obsessive.

Kael's writing was all those things – thrillingly so. She was a female critic at a time when cultural criticism, like most fields, was an even more male-dominated domain than it is today. She was a native Californian when the United States was considered by its intellectual elite to consist of New York City and its provinces. She was a bohemian who didn't pub-

Kael



lish her first movie review until she was thirty-three. She would have qualified as an outsider even if acceptance had been what she craved. It wasn't.

Though Kael quickly became notorious, she was unable to get a steady reviewing job or even to make a living as a writer for the first fifteen years of her career. Impatient with platitudes, she ridiculed establishment thinking and critical pieties in print, and her relationship to the publications she wrote for was more often adversarial than not.

Kael's great originality was to view everything personally. She took it for granted that movies and the rest of culture were part of life; that they could affect an audience and mesh with both common and private experience on all sorts of levels besides that of art. She responded to what she saw not only with her intellect but with her whole self – her past, her funky-arty San Francisco milieu, her sociological canniness, her reading, her humour, and (most famously) her libido. Ebulliently subjective, Kael was the first to grasp that subjectivity – the sense in which the meaning of any movie is a collaboration between what's on the screen and all that an audience brings to the cinema – was more often than not the thing that made the popular arts great.

Kael loved old American movies for their speed and scapegrace tomfoolery and lamented their decline into mealy-mindedness. But unlike the more dogged auteurs, she didn't falsify her enthusiasms by giving them more elevated attributes than they possessed. She knew that commercial movie-making was often junk, or at least not 'art' – what she liked was how telling movie junk at its most vigorous could be. Still, her achievement would have

been narrower and less radical if articulating the virtues of low entertainment had been her only contribution.

Gilbert Seldes had already done something like that in the 20s with his *The Seven Lively Arts*; a few years before Kael started writing, Robert Warshow had published his essays on the myths underpinning US gangster movies and Westerns. But Seldes' advocacy had been hampered by its one-sidedness – praising burlesque and jazz at the expense of high culture yet using high culture standards to justify his praise – and Warshow's by his inability to make himself one with what he surveyed. (In this, Warshow's title, *The Immediate Experience*, is a misnomer; few prose styles have been so ill suited to conveying immediacy.) Even Edmund Wilson, the best cultural journalist the US had produced, had treated his own interests with a certain loftiness. And while James Agee had tried to write criticism with first person directness, his attempts at plain American speech had a distressing habit of coming out fancy.

Kael's sensibility was both livelier and more encompassing than that of her predecessors. Though in her early writings she championed pulp's undemanding zest, she also responded with more alacrity and discernment than most US critics to Godard's daring, Truffaut's loose-limbed romanticism and Kurosawa's excitement. But these enthusiasms didn't stop her from seeing what was bogus in the early 60s art-house vogue for the Antonioni and Resnais films she so memorably dubbed the "come-dressed-as-the-sick-soul-of-Europe parties". She was a cultural democrat, not in the sense of praising crowd-pleasing work – whether the crowd was provincial or hoity-toity – but because she assumed that any kind of movie could, on its own terms, be great.

Kael's style expressed her own personality – brusquely nervy, alternately or even simultaneously sardonic and lyrical, an impertinence compressed into aphorism. Her most exciting pieces uninhibitedly summon up a whole complex of experience and knowledge to illuminate a movie from every angle and to distinguish what makes it significant from what makes it bad or good.

Among her best qualities is her sharp-eyed, good-humoured sense of kinship with her compatriots. "We are bumpkins", she once wrote, "haunted by the bottle of ketchup on the dining table at San Simeon". These words come from Kael's 1967 essay on *Bonnie and Clyde* and are part of a paragraph that tries to sum up the incongruous nature of American experience ("If there is such a thing as an American tragedy, it must be funny"), racing amid observations, wisecracks and memories to end up putting us back in the cinema seat, where that

Tom Carson's verdict on Pauline Kael as she retires as film critic of 'The New Yorker'

bottle of ketchup has unexpectedly begun to squirt blood in our faces. Reading a passage so bravura and heartfelt, you didn't just want to see the movie Kael was writing about, you wanted to be part of that country, to live in that mind.

Moviegoers among my friends tend to be obsessed by Pauline Kael. All roughly the same age, we share the experience of encountering her work in our youth, and feeling as if a stick of dynamite had just gone off between our ears. One friend remembers coming across her early books during a Midwestern adolescence; in my case, my family had just moved back to the US after years abroad and I was scrambling to find my place, if any, in this unknown place.

Kael's first two collections of reviews – *I Lost It at the Movies* (1965) and *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (1968) – were Rosetta stones to me. I'd had heroes before – fourteen is the age for that – but never a heroine. At the time I would hardly have had any notion of how Kael's sex had increased the odds against her achieving what she had, or even the scope of the achievement itself. What mattered was that I'd stumbled across somebody who was funny, tough and smart. I loved the way she ended *I Lost It at the Movies* with a letter to a film magazine, so that the book's last words are "Yours faithfully, Pauline Kael". To me, it was like the ending of *Huckleberry Finn*.

My discovery of Kael's early work coincided with her elevation to national prominence. *The New Yorker* hired her as a movie columnist in 1968; she initially alternated six month stints with Penelope Gilliatt, then took over the movie beat outright. The magazine seemed a peculiar forum for her, being then, as now, the most staid of the glossies. No one would accuse *The New Yorker* of covering everything important, but what did get covered had importance conferred on it by being in the magazine. However unlikely the pairing of institution and iconoclast, Kael was now in a commanding position to affect the moviegoing public.

Although her first pieces for the magazine (reprinted in *Going Steady*, 1970) suggest a Kael uncharacteristically unsure of herself and her new audience, she was soon to launch into the most feverish period of her career. The late 60s and early 70s were astonishing years in movie history, from *The Wild Bunch* and the first two *Godfather* movies to *Mash* and *Mean Streets*. A volatile new blend of private feeling and public consequences was exploding on the screen and Kael was the explosion's great chronicler. In her two collections from this era, *Deeper into the Movies* (1973) and *Reeling* (1976), she grapples on a grand scale with the corruption she saw pervading US society in the Nixon years, while struggling to make sense of the movies

that catered to the squalid national mood or heroically went against its grain.

Kael's rapture at the movies that were shaking everything up culminated in her celebrated pre-release 1972 review of *Last Tango in Paris*: "Bertolucci and Brando have altered the face of an art form", she declared. In hindsight, it's possible to see that review as another sort of benchmark. It's not only because one has a hard time going along with her extravagant claims for *Last Tango*, but because the alteration in movies wrought before then by Bertolucci, Coppola, Scorsese, Altman and many others was so soon to prove to be the most impermanent of face lifts. The cinema's dismal retreat from passion to placebo, from heady artistic risk-taking to no-risk business propositions was a sorry spectacle. It left Kael stranded.

As if to sustain the rationale of her career in the face of her subject's waning significance, Kael continued to write in the late 70s and 80s at a pitch that now seemed inordinate. She had spent most of her life swimming against the current; now she overpraised trivial work with the fervour of someone afraid of being left behind. She celebrated the crude, just-for-kicks blockbuster movie-making of the Reagan era, from *Indiana Jones* to *Batman*, and scorned the difficult, the arty and the excessively foreign, to the point of functioning as a cheerleader for America at its gung-ho, chauvinistic worst.

In *The New Yorker's* indulgent columns, Kael's prose had grown more garrulous, less trenchant. Flooding her readers with an abundance of diffuse descriptive writing, she also fell into the over-the-top habit of exalting favourite movies by devising instant (and instantly forgettable) categories for them. Reading superlatives such as "*Jaws*... may be the most cheerfully perverse scare movie ever made", or "*Nashville* is the funniest epic vision of America ever to reach the screen", I would grumblingly wonder what she'd name as the *second* most cheerfully perverse scare movie, or what she considered the funniest epic vision of America *not* to reach the screen. More perturbingly, for those who'd admired the intransigence of her San Francisco years, once installed in New York Kael became a would-be kingmaker.

Yet despite the rhetoric and special pleading one had to wade through to find them, Kael's

Kael's great originality was to view everything personally. She took it for granted that movies were part of life

perceptions were often as brilliant as ever. And even at her worst there wasn't another critic around who could touch her – though by the 80s there were plenty who were imitating her. Kael herself used her clout in the world of reviewing to champion – and, some have said, to all but dictate the opinions of – a group of mostly male young critics dubbed "the Paulettes". Given Kael's own fierce independence, it's a shabby legacy for her to have spawned acolytes who are seemingly content to carry on their careers in the shadow of a den mother. But the most depressing phenomenon is that virtually all the Paulettes enthusiastically ape Kael's most dubious quirks – the souped-up descriptions, the willingness to play favourites and the attention-seeking hyperbole – rather than the flintily idiosyncratic intellectual rigour that made her great.

Still, I'd argue that Kael's abiding influence lies outside her immediate coterie and maybe even outside movie criticism. As John Powers has suggested in his own appreciation of her in *LA Weekly*, the disappointment felt by her oldest admirers at her final phase may simply reflect our unhappiness that the movies themselves haven't lived up to the great promise of twenty years ago. Missing their power to transform us, and her ability to transform them for us, we see writing that doesn't transcend its subject as a failure of alchemy.

Besides, Kael had become part of a landscape that her own early work had remapped. Her impact on how we understand our culture, its effects on us and meanings to us has been so fundamental that millions who are utterly unaware of her work treat its premises as their own convictions. When a young rock band wrestles between craving commercial success and wanting to subvert its connotations, or baby boomers relate to the media bric-à-brac of their youth as a set of touchstones of community, they are acting out cultural conflicts and processes for which Kael was the first to find terms, motivations and redeeming values.

Gertrude Stein – another Northern Californian Jewish woman for whom the world had no role waiting until she devised one – brought Americans face to face with the twentieth century in painting, at the same time as her own writing was helping to create the twentieth century in American literature. Kael's influence has been less radical, but also, it could be argued, more pervasive.

Like Stein, Kael became the authority she'd rebelled against; like Stein, her later career testifies to the calcifying effects of becoming one's own mountain. But also like Stein, Kael's achievement turns whatever one could say against her into chaff. We see her faults through eyes she opened.



By James Woodhuysen

The software adviser to Commodore Business Machines (UK) carries a sports bag into the room. Out of it he pulls a portable colour TV and a Compact Disk player which is also a Commodore Amiga computer. Priced at perhaps £600, the CD player handles not just sound, but – like a videocassette recorder – images too. Better still, its computer allows both the visual and the aural to be selected and manipulated in an instant. All you have to do is point a small infra-red remote control unit at the captioned picture of your choice.

On the man's screen are pictures of Wild Weasels, Apache helicopters, Cruise missiles. With the remote control unit, I involuntarily select an F-111 from the menu. Cut to animated close-ups of the fighter. An American voice begins a recitation of its virtues: speed, range, turning circle, firepower.

This, I realise, is the face of TV in the 90s. Educational, informative, stimulating – and, most important, programmed by the viewer. All the technology of the Gulf War available for your personal delectation. The price of the specially programmed CD? In the US, somewhere between \$30 and \$100.

Seize the time

Multimedia, this jump and jive mix of audio, video, stills, text and computing, has been a long time coming. Yet now Apple, IBM, Tandy, Philips and Nintendo are all poised to make it a reality – even if their operating standards will be chaotically different. Also in the fray is Sony, which intends shortly to offer the 10 million home computer users of the US a sound and vision CD player for less than \$700.

Included in the price will come headphones and software based on the Tokyo giant's astute purchase of CBS Records (\$2 billion, 1988) and Columbia Pictures (\$3.4 billion, 1989). You'll be

able to watch Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, the Rolling Stones and Gloria Estefan dance and sing, then leap to detailed biographies of them all. Or you could signal a preference for Robin Williams and Robert De Niro in *Awakenings*, then – if Sony's programming of its movie CDs is prescient enough – demand to see the scientific background to medical cases of suspended animation.

It is true that squeezed household incomes may slow the take-up of tomorrow's consumer electronics in Britain. But there is little doubt that TV in the 90s will be a more dynamic, less passive experience than it has ever been in the past. At the same time there will simply be more screens – of all shapes and sizes – around the house, just as there are already a growing number of UK homes equipped with two TVs and two VCRs.

Interactivity and plurality, then, will be the dominant motifs of tomorrow's changed culture of electronic display in the home. But to understand why this should be the case, we need to examine how the British population's use of time has evolved in recent years.

We are a nation of workaholics. That part of our population in or seeking work is, among men, the highest in the EC and among women the second highest. More than 40 per cent of British employees do more than forty hours work, excluding overtime, a week; among the country's 3.25 million self-employed people, one in every four males does more than sixty hours. When we include overtime in the picture, UK men, in 1988, did an average of forty-four hours a week, while Germans, French, Italians and Spanish did forty, and the Dutch a trifling thirty-six.

In 1981 the UK working week amounted to fewer than forty-two hours; by 1989 it had stretched to nearly forty-four. In the same year nearly one in two people in Great Britain did weekend work and more than one in eight

worked shifts. With unemployment on the increase and child labour spreading, it looks likely that still more working hours will be demanded of us in the future.

So in a Britain where free time for men averages only forty-four hours a week, and for women only thirty-three, use of the TV has already become more discerning. Between 1985 and 1989, the Government's *Social Trends* tells us, there was a drop of nearly two hours in the 26.5 hours the average Briton spent watching broadcast programmes each week. Increasingly people seem to prefer to rent, buy or make their own videos – or not to stare at a TV screen at all.

Personal services

With rising discretion about what we watch, the interactivity promised by multimedia and similar developments looks set to meet with many supporters. Yet because interactivity can be so intensely personal a matter, it is hard to see households remaining satisfied with a single 'smart' screen. A recent NOP survey found that 9 million British families row about what programmes they want to watch. Where are the couch potatoes here? From such disunity, a desire for several TV screens, and interactive ones at that, cannot be far behind.

Take children, for example. At present one in four British mothers uses the TV to keep her kids occupied. Add to this fact widespread concern about school standards and school-leaver employment prospects and it is not hard to see why a multimedia unit by each child's bed will become what many parents aspire to. Thus while *Social Trends* reveals that only one in four British households had a computer in 1988, it also shows that among families of five persons or more the figure was roughly one in two. Already, it seems, home computer screens are seen as a major tool for educational advancement. What will change now is that small ▶

Home Screen home

Just what is it that makes tomorrow's homes so different?



◀ families will realise this and big ones will decide to stop haggling over whose turn it is in front of the screen and buy an extra terminal.

Even the retired and unemployed, among whom men have about ninety and women eighty hours free time a week, do not contradict this trend. The interest of senior citizens in self-development, and of the unemployed in acquiring the skills necessary to find work, should not be underestimated. One in ten people in their sixties in the US uses a computer at home, with Apple Macs, large-type software and electronic mail being particularly popular. In the decade to come, the barrier to interactive screen usage among the old and jobless promises to be price, not attitude.

Intelligent screens, then, may become ubiquitous. Yet the central hearth for images, at least in the short term, will remain the VCR.

Video to go

The average VCR owner barely borrows a tape a fortnight nowadays, compared with nearly one a week when videos peaked a few years ago. Worth £600 million a year, rented videos in the UK are now being caught by bought ones, worth £300 million. Yet rented videos are far from exhausted. Satellite and terrestrial channels use big advertising budgets to fight for film viewers for each feature. The unexpected result of this promotional blitz? People become aware of particular movie titles, but instead of watching them at the appointed hour, they pop out a few days or weeks later to rent them on video.

That video rental will prosper is even more likely if renting a video becomes a process which substitutes the kind of interactivity that cable TV offers for time-consuming trips down to the video shop. And plans are afoot in the US to arrange for exactly such interactivity. The aim is to put twenty channels of movies on a satellite, enabling audiences to order up a film within ten minutes of their decision to do so. The project, known as Sky Cable, may come to fruition within ten years if Rupert Murdoch, one of its backers, can sort out his debts.

The Henley Centre for Forecasting believes that the interactive nature of cable may give it a universality, in the long term, that passively received satellite TV will never enjoy. By the end of the century, indeed, North American telecommunications firms hope to raise the

fraction of British homes passed by cable from today's 2 per cent to the near-saturation levels of Scandinavia, Holland and Belgium. Even before the new millennium, however, cable could bring to a small proportion of British households unprecedented interactivity, in the shape of a UK version of a Canadian system named Vidéotron.

Operating with great success in Montreal, Vidéotron is a £10-a-month cable TV which, through some relatively simple computing routines, hooks you up directly to the origin of the images you're looking at. After the *News at Ten* headlines, for example, you could skip the latest Cabinet feud and opt instead for an ITN round-up of the day's business developments. If your children like the quiz show *Blockbusters*, Vidéotron could arrange for them to become live, remote participants. And if you want to catch that *Match of the Day* goal from the pitch-side camera of your choice, you'll have the chance to do just that.

High Definition TV – though not interactive – would act as a potent signal of the new era in screen usage. NHK, the Japan Broadcasting System, already offers HDTV, but at £20,000 a set. It broadcasts an analogue variety, which demands massive dishes when satellite transmissions are used. The future probably belongs to digital HDTV. That can be received by modest dishes and offers a sharper picture than its analogue rival, much as digitally mastered CDs boast better sound quality than LPs.

Aided by \$75 million of Pentagon money in 1991 alone, HDTV may arrive in the US, priced perhaps at \$10,000, as early as 1995. The contending consortia are Zenith and AT&T; General Instrument and Boston's MIT; and Philips, France's Thomson, and America's NBC and David Sarnoff Research Center. This last partnership could well have a chance of bringing HDTV to Europe.

What will it look like? Costing – eventually – an extra £500 a set, screens will stretch from 4×3 to 16×9, nearly double in lines, lose the veil of conventional TV and appear like windows into three-dimensional reality. The impact of HDTV, in short, promises to be as great as that of colour TV when it was introduced.

These developments do not end the ways screens will grow more convivial and more numerous in the 90s. From Japan, £300 laser video players made by Pioneer have already spread to the US and may soon arrive here.

Pioneer has now gone well beyond the crisply shot and orchestrated *karaoke* beach sunsets and waterfalls popular among Japanese laser-disc fans: today, it offers £15 discs of Madonna, and – joined by Sony, Hitachi and Nippon Columbia – has something like 10,000 Hollywood titles on its lists.

Similarly Kodak's new system for reproducing stills on TV may succeed where Sony and Canon have not. Aided by a Philips multimedia CD player, Kodak's system allows the viewer high-resolution zooms into the family member of his or her choice.

And even Britain now has something to offer in consumer electronics. At Edinburgh University scientists at VLSI Vision Ltd have made an 8×8mm chip which directly digitises incoming images, so laying the basis for the mass introduction of cheaper home security surveillance systems than conventional closed-circuit TV, and – possibly – for watch-sized videophones à la Dick Tracy.

The interactivity brought about by micro-electronics means that we will dominate the screen more, and have a more conscious relationship with it. Subconsciously, however, our lives may become one big screen. Watching manufactured images may become as integral a part of everyday life as yawning, mopping one's brow, breathing.

Private pleasures

Could screens take over? In today's climate of censorship, we can certainly anticipate that there will be a big confrontation between Mary Whitehouse and the proponents of Virtual Reality. VR means joysticks, gloves studded with sensors, and other body-tracking devices; above all, it means donning one-LCD-per-eye-headsets. Ready? Then, with your friends, you can make your way into any number of tactile, animated and noisy 3D worlds: a walk on the moon, a nudge in the ribs on a roller-coaster, you name it.

At present VR data processing speeds are slow, and each screen has but 300 lines on it. But once it reaches the high street, perhaps in ten years' time, VR will definitely be the most interactive kind of display available. With it, you yourself become part of the information. And if you want to pilot a virtual F-111 to a virtual Baghdad from the privacy of your own armchair, no doubt a programme will be available, one day, from your local shop.

Twenty channels of movies on a satellite will enable television audiences to order up a film within ten minutes



Richard Johnson goes in search of the video world beyond the feature film

Where ABs fear to tread

● Video offers something that the written word can't: the chance to see Jane Fonda suffer her own hip and thigh exercises; the chance to explain the birds and bees without being in the same room as your children; and the means to freeze frame and really 'Stop Smoking With Alf Fowles'.

According to the trade association for publishers of pre-recorded video cassettes, the British Videogram Association, we're buying tapes in ever increasing numbers. In an interview sample of 13,000, sales of pre-recorded cassettes increased from 1,475 in the final quarter of 1989 to 3,055 in the final quarter of 1990 – and less than 40 per cent of these were feature films.

Video executives are building in more added value to pre-recorded cassettes. 'Air Strike Desert Storm' ("with dramatic footage of the night bombing of Baghdad, Tomahawk missiles peeling toward Iraq and the brilliant deployment of smart bombs") and 'Gulf War – The Complete Story' both offer free battle maps. And where else but 'Bigfoot Strikes Again – The King of the Monster Trucks' could you get exclusive through-the-windshield camera action?

But not everyone is buying into the sell-through dream. "The more affluent, the less likely one

is to be interested in video at all", says Norman Abbott, director general of the British Videogram Association. "Usage is more likely to take the form of off-air timeshift recording of programmes of special interest – news broadcasts, sports, documentaries – and you don't get many people in the upper socio-economic classes venturing into video shops". ABs make up only 19 per cent of total tape hirers.

Maybe if there was a hi-fi equivalent on video, offering top quality sound and image reproduction, the middle classes might get more excited. Classical music on video hasn't been a great success, though pop music makes up more than 12 per cent of total pre-recorded sales.

And film buffs aren't proving too eager to part with their money either. According to Adrian Munsey, managing director of Odyssey Video, "None of the people who are interested in cinema – new films, new directors – buy videos. They don't feel that they should. We did 'Repulsion' by Polanski, had every publicity you could have imagined – Catherine Deneuve brought over for the Michael Aspel show, clips, everything – and that still only sold 2,500".

And the buyers for the multiple stores don't seem to be doing much to change middle-class habits either. Both Woolworths and

W. H. Smith, who control about 50 per cent of the British sell-through market, stock only best sellers. In record shops, punters can browse through classical, jazz, dance, rock and pop. Book buyers can get lost between Architecture and Zoology. But the received wisdom is that there just aren't the sectors in video.

To change our habits, the video film industry has come together to finance a £10 million advertising campaign, preaching to the upmarket as well as to the converted renter. By booking airtime around programmes such as 'Inspector Morse', 'Roseanne' and 'Cheers', according to 'Video Trade Weekly', "There's an attempt to get those people to become regular renters rather than just going to the video shop every few months because they hear 'Mr and Mrs Bridge' is out".

Meanwhile, companies do their best to interest the reluctant with coffee-table videos. High art now comes on VHS, and "the definitive visual history of European art" – 'The National Gallery – A Private View' – is now on tape. Even the ICA is selling videos of its 'Writers in Conversation' series.

Moving into video art, London Video Access and Jettisoundz are releasing 'State of the Art', a package of video graphics, and 'Subversive Desire', an experimental, non-



narrative videowork, to an eager public. (It's ironic that video art – which grew out of a backlash against the passivity of television viewing – is now interested in sales figures as well as in exploring the television form.) But we are not talking impulse buys here – Friday night in and a take-away with 'Subversive Desire'.

Chatterers need to unwind, too. "Modern folk need their senses stimulating", reads the promotional material for a video of a log fire. "So when you put on a record, tape or CD, switch on the TV. Turn the sound down and you've got a visual stimulus in the background. But it's usually too distracting. You want to know what's happening. What President

Bush had to say about disarmament. Who shot JR. Which football player's been sent off. New Age ambient videos are the answer". Other than thirty minutes of burning wood, you can buy your ambience in the form of a cascading waterfall, a tank of fish or a talking parrot.

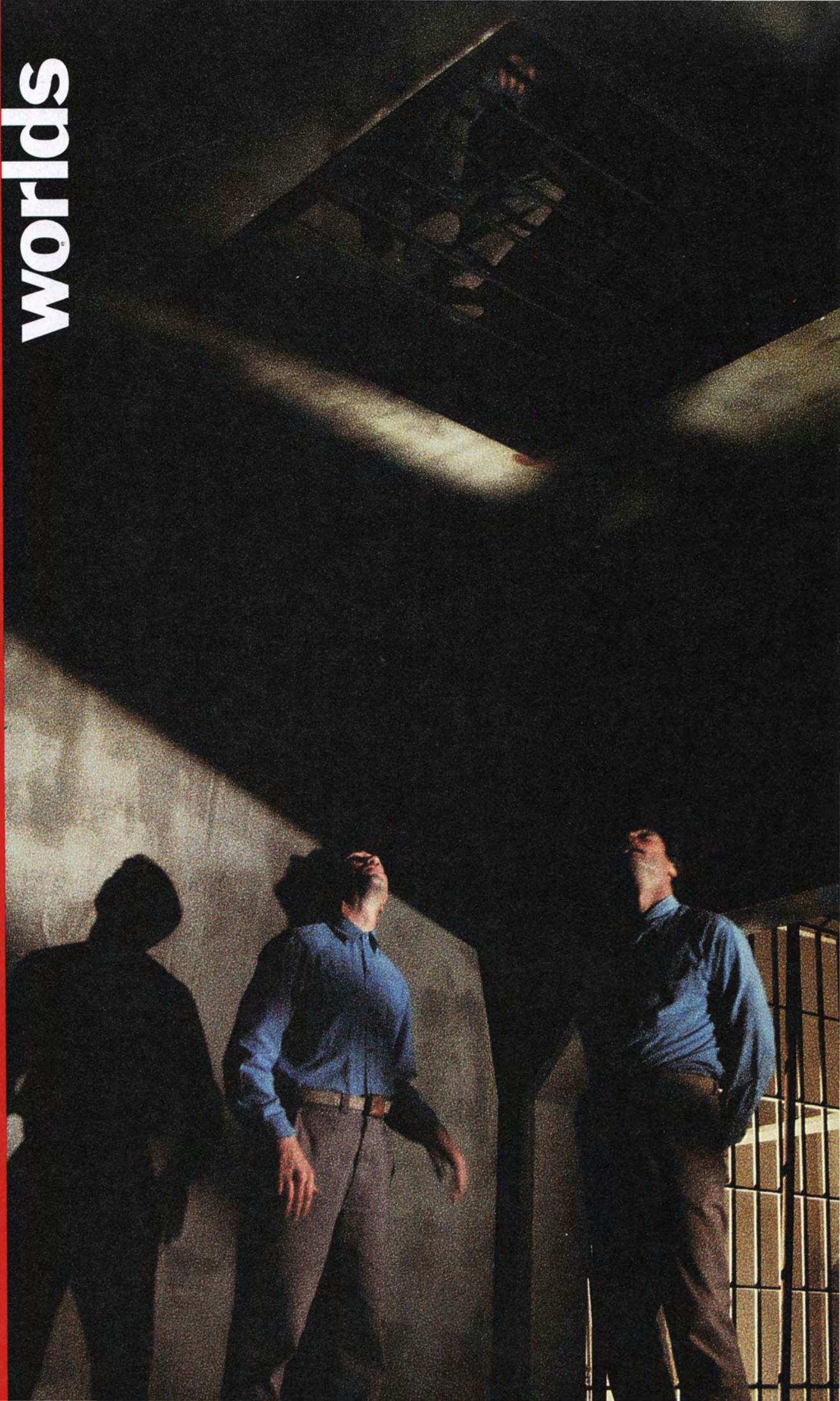
The first-person mosaic market is crowding up. Odyssey, with what Munsey describes as "comic attempts to break the narrative form", will be launching an insomniacs' tape (sheep jumping over fences) and a single mother tape (a grumpy man reading the paper and saying 'Go away' to the children) in the autumn.

Americans learned how to escape the narrative form at an early age, with sell-through videos such as 'Early Images', a half-hour tape designed for infants up to one year old with affluent parents who have nothing better to spend their money on. The montage of brightly coloured, computer-generated geometric designs and vaguely recognisable shapes (chiefly a tweet-tweet and a chuff-chuff) moves across a dark screen.

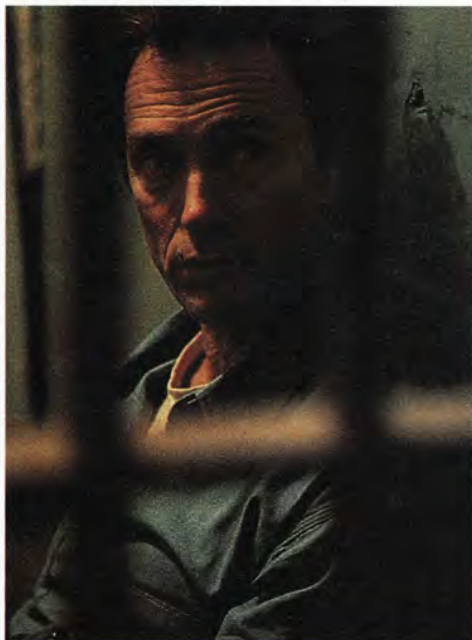
But for the moment, taking video into Britain's book culture remains a problem. Maybe one day all classes of Britain will be welcome in video stockists – truck racers picking and mixing their narrative and non-narrative titles with ambient New Agers.

Dark

worlds



'Escape from Alcatraz' has one of the most remarkable silent sequences in cinema. Henry Sheehan examines the late Don Siegel's vision of insane power



Clint Eastwood, star of 'Escape from Alcatraz', above; he escapes with his fellow-inmates from blackness into darkness, left

The chase is the device for which Don Siegel was best known during his long career. Perhaps learning to appreciate the need for a dynamic visual motor while head of the Warner Bros montage department, Siegel became such a master of the form that by his fifth film, *The Big Steal* (1949), he was already parodying it. Yet he never abandoned it and some of his most famous films – from *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* to *Charley Varrick* – are based around fast and furious, not to mention desperate, pursuit.

But Siegel would also occasionally trap his characters within movement-denying settings that replaced explosions with implosions. *Riot in Cell Block 11* (1954) and *The Beguiled* (1971), made seventeen years and several budgetary worlds apart, allowed Siegel to examine the futile and frantic attempts of boxed-in prisoners to escape, not just their cells, but the conditions of their lives. For *Riot*, Siegel adopted the cool reserve he usually kept for his most violently paranoid features to promulgate a kind of social pessimism; in the trendier *Beguiled*, he assumed a mordant sexual sarcasm.

In *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979), his third to last film, Siegel came up with one of those valedictory works that few veteran directors have the courtesy to leave us. Here the central themes in his work – the conception of character and the moral acceptability of anti-social or violent behaviour to preserve that character against the oppression of a conformity-crazed society – are addressed with startling clarity. And Siegel manages this in a style that remains allusive and elliptical, while still invoking a variety of audience-pleasing, B-movie stunts.

Escape from Alcatraz opens with three pans, which start in a large, clear longshot over the daytime skyline of San Francisco, segue into a rainy night-time over the bay, and continue downwards to follow the transfer of a prisoner from a police car to the armed ferry to Alcatraz prison, which we have glimpsed sitting menacingly out in the bay. All three pans have to do with the compression and expansion of time and space, readjustments meant to mark the distortions an individual suffers behind bars. (This is always a man; gender-neutral descriptions are useless in the all-male Siegel universe.) Here the assertion of individuality becomes literally a fight of endurance and turf, of time and place – concepts that have no meaning in the Siegel universe except as they apply to particular men.

The first pan, in which night-time falls impossibly quickly, is clear enough in its intention: the normal spans of sun and moon are about to become irrelevant. The second and third are more complex, in that they cover essentially the same action from the same perspective, but with different focal length lenses.

In the first, a telescopic lens gives us a close-in view of two plainclothes cops leading a third man, handcuffed, from a car. That the man in the middle is Clint Eastwood is an obvious tip-off to his importance – no one was more aware than Siegel of star power – and this particular lens and the slightly raised angle allow Eastwood to dominate the scene. But no sooner ►

Filmography

Don Siegel
born 26 October 1912
in Chicago
died 20 April 1991
in California

Star in the Night
20 mins (1945)
Hitler Lives?
18 mins (1945, US title:
Your Job in Germany)
The Verdict
86 mins (1946)
Night unto Night
92 mins (1949)
The Big Steal
71 mins (1949)
No Time for Flowers
83 mins (1952)
Duel at Silver Creek
77 mins (1952)
Count the Hours
74 mins (1953, UK title:
Every Minute Counts)
China Venture
82 mins (1953)
Riot in Cell Block 11
80 mins (1954)
Private Hell 36
81 mins (1954)
An Annapolis Story
81 mins (1955, UK title:
The Blue and the Gold)
Invasion of the Body Snatchers 80 mins (1956)
Crime in the Streets
81 mins (1956)
A Spanish Affair
93 mins (1957)
Baby Face Nelson
83 mins (1957)
The Gun Runners
82 mins (1958)
The Line-Up
86 mins (1958)
Edge of Eternity
81 mins (1959)
Hound Dog Man
87 mins (1959)
Flaming Star
92 mins (1960)
Hell is for Heroes
90 mins (1962)
The Killers
95 mins (1964)
The Hanged Man
87 mins (1964)
Stranger on the Run
97 mins (1967)
Madigan
101 mins (1968)
Coogan's Bluff
94 mins (1969)
Death of a Gunfighter
94 mins (1969)
Two Mules for Sister Sara 113 mins (1970)
The Beguiled
105 mins (1971)
Dirty Harry
102 mins (1971)
Charley Varrick
111 mins (1973)
The Black Windmill
106 mins (1974, UK title:
Drabble)
The Shootist
100 mins (1976)
Telefon 103 mins (1977)
Escape from Alcatraz
112 mins (1979)
Rough Cut 111 mins (1980)
Jinxed! 103 mins (1982)

Siegel directed pilots and episodes of several TV series, including *Bus Stop*, *The Line-Up*, *Convoy*, *Destry*, *Breaking Point* and *Twilight Zone*. He also produced the series *The Legend of Jesse James*.

In Siegel's nightmare prison, Eastwood is enmeshed not just by bars, but by men who herd other men



◀ do we recognise what is going on, than Siegel shifts to a shorter lens, in which the darkness and rain surround the men. Here, their metered step across a catwalk and down a pier appears mysterious, almost ritualistic.

Once off the wharf, Eastwood is clapped inside a dark and crowded bobbing shuttle – a passage Siegel plays out in near silence – suddenly to emerge in the bright light of the prison to be classified and dressed by stoic guards. He has a greater space to move around, but less freedom to navigate; it is a space described not just by bars, but by men who open and shut gates, who herd other men.

This is one of the most remarkably eloquent, and remarkably silent, opening sequences in cinema. It provides a revealing contrast with a similar use of telescoping space and darkness in *Riot in Cell Block 11*. The most eerily violent scene in that movie shows a panicked guard running frantically down a long, unlit passageway in a cell block momentarily unoccupied by rioting prisoners. He comes shock still when a particularly menacing con appears at one end; when another appears at the other, the huge space is literally squeezed and all the running the guard tries to do cannot keep him from ending up against a wall, beaten and bloodied in a frame suddenly shorn of depth.

In *Riot*, which expended considerable portions of its eighty minutes decrying prison conditions and agitating for reform, Siegel is still the conventional liberal. The scenes involving the prisoners alone with their guards – a sudden reversal in status of the hunter and hunted – are full of psychotic rage and anger. But Siegel's approval of this rage is tentative. It can be explained and understood, but never condoned. Hope lies in the reform of the system.

No such palliative is offered in *Escape from Alcatraz*. Though historical fact demands the 1960 setting, the twenty-years-on viewpoint bespeaks a justified cynicism about prison reform. No reform is possible for Alcatraz because now it is not the prisoners who are psychotic, but the warden. Played by Patrick McGoochan with that actor's fondness for personable psychosis, the head warden is a tight-lipped control freak with a habit of instituting gratuitously repressive rules. He is utterly out of his mind and completely in charge.

Siegel also presents us with crazed wardens in *The Beguiled*, but here they are women

twisted with desire. The story of a Union civil war soldier who ends up in the care and confinement of the director and students of a Confederate girls' school, the warders of *The Beguiled* are less characters than projections of the soldier's own sexual power fantasies.

In *Escape from Alcatraz*, sex is replaced by pure power. Even the one sexual interlude is a serio-comic demonstration that the sources of sexual activity are far more important than its mechanics. Frank Morris, the Eastwood character, quickly attracts the amorous intentions of a muscular, obviously insane fellow-inmate called Wolf. Morris jokingly beats up Wolf in the shower, but when Wolf attempts a knifing, the guards step in and brutally beat both of them. Siegel turns Wolf temporarily into a sympathetic figure as he becomes a plaintively human punching bag for the guards, men whose apparent self-control is only a mask for a deeper psychosis.

Wolf is an aberration, and the other inmates deal with him occasionally violently, but always, it is made clear, with fairness. Siegel uses eye-level or low-angled shots to show the inmates together, away from the guards, tracing a visual equality. But when a prisoner is shown physically subordinate to a guard – lying in bed below a towering watchman, for example – bars dominate the screen, often in silhouette in a design of fierce abstraction. Away from the bars, as during Morris' initial interview with the warden, Siegel's camera inclines to take the prisoner's point of view, so giving the prisoner, by their relative status, a superior moral position to the warden's.

The relative differences among the prisoners also emerge in Siegel's *mise-en-scène*. When Morris gets his first job in the prison library, he is ushered into a large cage filled with books, where he receives an unfriendly greeting from the Afro-American inmate, English (Paul Benjamin), who is perched up on a stairway. This

No reform is possible for Alcatraz because it is not the prisoners who are psychotic, but the warden

elevation is a prefigurement of the respect due English, who is crippled and so cannot try to escape the prison, but who resists regimentation by educating himself or by calling the white inmates, emblematic of the racism that originally landed him behind bars, "boy".

Having established the social environment, Siegel gets to the individual. At times he may appear to be sentimentalising the notion of individualism in overdrawn characters like an older prisoner, Doc (Roberts Blossom), who paints, or Litmus (Frank Ronzio), who keeps a pet mouse. But these apparently saccharine gestures are examples of the canny B-movie director at work. Not only do they provide broadly accessible popular symbols, but Siegel employs them with unexpected violence. When Doc has his paints taken away on the warden's whim, he cuts off his fingers – on screen – in the woodshop. And Litmus suffers a heart attack and dies when the warden crumbles one of the flowers he cultivated with Doc. By raising the stakes, Siegel adds a dollop of malicious risk.

But symbols alone are insufficient to the main problem of defining self and the limits of resistance. What defines character, in the end, is those actions one takes at risk. When Morris mobilises a trio of prisoners (Fred Ward, Jack Thibau, Larry Hankin) to join him in an escape attempt, the derring-do takes a back seat to the painstaking preparation of tools and their secretive, incremental employment. Siegel's camera becomes absorbed with Morris' nightly scrapings at the grillwork which leads from his cell to a utility tunnel, with the thefts and clandestine meetings. And even after the prisoners begin their escapes, the escapade becomes less a matter of bold leaps and daring runs, than of mutual aid, whispered instructions and supporting arms piercing an enveloping darkness.

The preparation and escape take up most of the film's final third, and as it progresses, the action becomes a matter of quick, abbreviated movements. Though practical, these again possess symbolic value since they usually involve breaking the pattern of movements the prisoners are allowed. And though Siegel's characters rarely talk much, it is impossible to imagine them not talking at all. The very act of plotting, of talking for some reason other than answering a guard, becomes a self-affirming act.

When Morris and two of his friends finally do escape, it is into that darkness. With the screen suffused with blind night, the three paddling men form a flickering light in a lower corner, a light that will soon go out leaving nothing but the camouflage of the sky.

This is Siegel's answer to violence. After thirty-five years of musing on the uses of violence against criminal oppression, he came to see it as an integral part of that oppression, as a symptom of paranoia. Better to escape those environments which foster social pathology than to risk infection. Better to have a whole dark world, with borders watery and indistinct, than the sharp, well-ordered brightness of arbitrary, and thus insane, order.

Forever young

The "greatness" of the *The Great Escape* is inseparable from its cast, and especially from its star, Steve McQueen. He's what movies – especially escapist movies – are all about: *not* performances, but personalities.

W. R. Burnett, co-screenwriter of the film, has gone on record as saying: "McQueen was an impossible bastard... oh, he drove you crazy". Burnett, a prolific and underrated American writer, knew a thing or two about trapped misfits. He had created *Little Caesar*, *Mad Dog Roy Earle* in *High Sierra* and the band of outsiders in *The Asphalt Jungle* (caper movies share a significant aspect of *The Great Escape's* appeal: a group of specialists coming together to plan intricately and execute a dangerous task).

In a career that spanned more than fifty movies, Burnett claimed: "*The Great Escape* has to be the best picture I ever worked on". He shared the writing credit with James Clavell, whose own experiences as a British POW of the Japanese make his *King Rat* an interesting companion piece.

Steve McQueen stands for something the movies seem to have lost, along with everything else that once made them so important in our lives: the power of iconography. The way he smiles his trademark smile, the way he leans against a building or tosses a baseball, the way he squints at the sun. The motorcycle.

Of course, he's merely playing himself, another lost and underrated art. The clothes are his own (his wife claims to have created his costume by tearing the sleeves off an old blue sweatshirt); his bid for freedom on the motorcycle, the most famous set piece of the film and of his career, was written into the script specifically for him.

The first thing even a studio executive knows about successful film-making is that you have to *care* about the characters. Well, this is a movie that presents a dozen or so characters with wonderful economy and subtlety, with none of the hamhandedness of today's films. Even the German captors are sympathetic; the film is so perfectly structured that it doesn't need sadistic guards or an outlandish Kommandant.

The film's structure, too, provides the most apt example of what the great screenwriter Charles Brackett said a movie should do: make the audience want something very, very much – and then give it to them. First there is the tense, enclosed world of the



The innocent pleasures of 'The Great Escape' are remembered by Lem Dobbs, who co-scripted 'The Hard Way' and wrote the new Soderbergh feature, 'Kafka'

camp and the painstaking preparations for escape; then the exhilarating liberation of the escape itself. If the pleasure of the first half lies in the triumph of teamwork, in the second we follow the fortunes of individuals as they scatter cross-country in all directions. The sustained focus on a single communal endeavour is replaced by a kaleidoscope of separate adventure stories.

For a movie that is commonly thought of only as slam-bang entertainment, *The Great Escape* is also extremely moving, a quality virtually unknown in escapist fare today. Some of the people in this film die – and don't come back to life.

The Great Escape is one of those movies that stays with you forever if you see it when you're young. I didn't see it on its first release, but a year or two later. My father had seen it and recommended it, enthralling me before the fact by telling me all about it.

We tend to think of eight year olds as people who can only enjoy cartoons and *Ninja Turtles*, yet my best friend and I, with precious little information about the Second World War, sat through this long, grown-up film and loved every minute of it. It was unquestionably more exciting than any 'children's' film we ever saw. By today's standards, let alone an eight year old's, *The Great Escape* looks as textured and mature as *La Grande illusion*. It's not, of course, but that's the difference between the movies we know are great and the ones we think are great.

The secret of *The Great Escape's* enduring appeal, of course, is that at heart it is an eight year old's movie. Of

course it's the seminal film of today's immature film industry! Robert Zemeckis has put forward a canny theory about this: "It's the greatest rebel-in-school movie ever made."

The school analogy is spot on. The atmosphere is established right at the start, as the prisoners arrive at the 'new' camp. We watch them explore, settle in, claim bunks. Rascally behaviour begins at once, with much nose-thumbing at authority, assessing just how far they can push their new instructors. The 'headmaster', in the form of the long-suffering Kommandant, talks sternly of "putting all of our rotten eggs in one basket". We have nicknames and peculiar lingo ("scrounger", "goons", "cooler").

But the key element of the school metaphor is *pals*. This is surely the strongest emotional chord that recalls our lost youth. Some friendships are formed in the course of the movie (Garner and Pleasance), some are already in place (Bronson/Leyton), some old friends are reunited early on (Attenborough/Jackson).

James Coburn doesn't hang out with anybody, less out of a loner philosophy than simply because he's the quiet type – like the science-minded kid only interested in tinkering with his private constructions. McQueen, the true loner, doesn't so much make a friend as acquire an adoring sidekick, Angus Lennie ("The Mole").

In this era of buddy movies which aren't about buddies at all but rather bickering antagonists, *The Great Escape* remains one of the screen's rare, realistic and unsentimental evocations of male friendship.



Steve McQueen: rebel with a cause in 'The Great Escape', 1963

Family affairs

B. Ruby Rich

Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography

Patricia Holland and Jo Spence (eds), Virago, £14.99, 224pp

James Dean: Behind the Scene

Leith Adams and Keith Burns (eds), Smith Gryphon, £19.99, 224pp

Paul Strand: An American Vision

in association with the National Gallery of Art, Aperture/Robert Hale, £55, 168pp

These three books about photography jostle like feuding relatives at a funeral: all members of the same family, they nevertheless communicate in alien, even hostile languages, contradicting one another in intriguing and dramatic ways. The best arguments occur between *James Dean* and *Family Snaps*, with *Paul Strand* making a grand entrance at the end.

Annette Kuhn, in one of the sharpest pieces on domestic photography in *Family Snaps*, succinctly brings together a number of the collection's themes: family dramas rooted in autobiography, a belief in the significance of the photograph in our psychic landscapes, and the value of photocriticism as therapy. She is not the only contributor to sift through piles of photographs in search of unifying narratives, illuminating how the family album can affect the future by calling up the past.

Stuart Hall looks at the albums of other families – actually, the families of 'others' – to see how the images conjure a history of and for their compilers. His search through both studio and informal portraits of West Indian immigrants to the UK in the 50s is used to give a rereading of that decade.

If Kuhn and Hall had been handed the James Dean archives, the results might have been revelatory. Instead, these two books separately demonstrate photography's ability to confer anonymity on the one hand and celebrity on the other. In *James Dean: Behind the Scene*, the Hollywood dream machine strikes out in support of its own immortality. Once fed back into the studio publicity system, the photographs of Dean subside into place, become naturalised and mean again what they did in the first place: look, this is a celebrity; look, see him try to act as though he's not; look, see how we control him for your pleasure.

To what end? Think sex, and then again, don't. Dennis Hopper is the big

catch of this collection, the insider who worked with Dean and whose life was "confused and disoriented for years by his passing". Hopper's introduction is a mediocre pastiche of anecdotes and first-person recollections, until he steps out of his nostalgic mode for a quick detour: "I find it unfortunate that the two biographies that have been written about James Dean say that he was gay. James Dean was not gay".

Oh, right. Hopper thinks he proves his point by saying that Dean's great loves were Pier Angeli and Ursula Andress. Never mind that he also says that Dean's great idols were Montgomery Clift and Marlon Brando. Too bad we can't borrow Simon Watney from *Family Snaps* to eye the book's prize photo of Dean out on the porch with Rock Hudson.

This is Warner Bros' very own family album, and the studio did for Dean what Val Williams contends that the one celebrity in the Spence/Holland volume, Vanessa Bell, did for herself: "Using the snapshot as it has always been used, as an unchangeable presenter of evidence, [she] propagandised her own life, making what was complex seem simple, obscuring pain and imagining an idyll". So *James Dean: Behind the Scene* and *Family Snaps* have something in common after all. Both play with sexuality and repression, publicity and intimacy, collection and dispersal – the former to infuse the photograph with an incantatory power, the latter to defuse it.

What is missing from both volumes, however, is the photograph's own power, not as mediator of something else, but in and of itself. The reproductions in *Family Snaps* are dim and muddy, as though to drive home the point that the photograph shouldn't be revered, while those in *James Dean* are press-kit standard. The theorists want to deny us the pleasure; the archivists think it's all in what we ourselves bring to the photos. The photographic aura, the well-crafted print, the perfectly composed shot are all missing. It remains for the Daddy of them all, Paul Strand, to bring 'art' into the dialogue.

A hush, ecclesiastical if not spiritual, should accompany the opening of the centennial *Paul Strand* volume: more than one foot square and the product of a high-end collaboration between Aperture and the [US] National Gallery of Art. The introductory essay

by Sarah Greenough is one of those worshipful paens to pioneering male genius that have always been a staple of the trade. Thanks to Richard Benson, the prints are gorgeous, fulfilling the desire to luxuriate in the image denied by the two other books, which address us as readers, not viewers.

And yet, and yet. There is something poignant in the Strand commemoration, intimated in his own 1917 manifesto for photography: "This is an absolute unqualified objectivity". Strand's life, his time in Mexico, his work in the 30s with the Film and Photo League, Frontier Films and Clurman's Group Theater, his self-imposed exile in Europe beginning with the McCarthy period, his populism and positivism – all this combines to situate the man and the implications of his work in a terrain quite distinct from that suggested by the veneer of this volume. Sadly, the photographs as reproduced here speak little of what Strand lived and intended.

When first taken, Strand's photographs occupied a space between the family album and the publicity shot: the portrait of the 'common man', the landscape rooted in history, the notion of photography as a medium that could break through the lies to tell some kind of truth. Call it lost innocence, *passé* romanticism, antiquated idealism, nobility of craft. Call it a tragedy that Strand was Strand precisely because photography at that time did not yet automatically denote 'art', though of course it has ended up subsumed by art after all.

And yet, and yet, there is even more lurking outside the frame. Coincident with the book's appearance, *Vanity Fair* published an excerpt from Benita Eisman's forthcoming book, in which are described not only the wife-swapping between Strand and Alfred Stieglitz, but also the love affair between Georgia O'Keeffe and Strand's wife Beck. Impossible to look at Strand's portraits of Beck in the same way again. Suddenly the sober rectitude of the Strand legend tilts into the world of sexuality that is a subtext, however denied, of all three books.

Sex and photography grew up together in the post-Victorian age, so the surplus meanings given off by the images in these volumes should come as no surprise. Nor should the fact that it was Daddy who took the snaps, but Mommy who pasted them into the album; the studio bosses and camera-





'Rebecca', 1922.
From the world of
celebrities and
photocalls, we stare

into the world of Paul
Strand as his subjects
gaze out at us. Is the
troubling power of the

photograph bound
up with its innocent
belief in its own
truthfulness?

men who took or commissioned the publicity stills, but (mostly) women who swooned over them; a male artist who fashioned the photographs, while a woman was his muse and often his subject; a white man who took or commissioned the photographs of 'natives'. All this provides clues for today's cultural archaeologists, all of us freed to make new images out of these photographs and new texts from their history.

Can Britain make it?

Michael Eaton

Take Ten: Contemporary British Film Directors

Jonathan Hacker and David Price,
Clarendon Press, £17.50, 340pp

Authors Hacker and Price shoot themselves in the foot in the first line of their introduction to this collection of interviews. After asserting that: "The director is rarely, if ever, the sole creative force in such a collaborative medium as film", they go on to chart a naive auteurism through the disparate careers of ten extremely diverse directors (Lindsay Anderson, Richard Attenborough, Bill Forsyth, Stephen Frears, Peter Greenaway, Derek Jarman, Ken Loach, Alan Parker, Nicolas Roeg and John Schlesinger).

The choice of candidates for this dubious Parnassus seems somewhat arbitrary. Where, for instance, is Ken Russell (surely a purveyor of a "discernibly British style", if such a thing exists)? And if Peter Yates, Ridley and Tony Scott, and Michael Apted have all forsaken their 'Britishness', is this not also true of Schlesinger and Parker most of whose films made in the last twenty years are distinctly 'American'?

The book consists of an essay about each director followed by an interview and filmography. In almost every case, the film-makers' off-the-cuff musings are more revealing than the authors' crumpled thumbnail sketches (trawled for the most part, with the minimum of paraphrase, from yellowing articles in the popular press and trade journals). If we must have auteur criticism, let it be passionate, quixotic and demented. Let it be fuelled by close, eager scrutiny of themes not necessarily recognised by the film-makers themselves and sustained by meticulous *mise-en-scène* analysis. Let it not be this bland, uncommitted prose.

But the truly depressing aspect of this volume emerges as a subtext in the interviews. The members of this makeshift Pantheon all express a ►

◀ sense of melancholy, a lack of appreciation felt after a lifetime spent serving the cinematic muse in these islands. Forsyth declares that he has lost his way, that he realises that "movies play a very small part in people's lives". Jarman laments his unfulfilled promise, speculating that he might have been better off sticking to painting. Loach admits that the here-today-gone-tomorrow quality of the medium seems to ensure its inability to effect social change.

Perhaps there is a characteristic common to all British film-makers after all: after being taken to the cleaners and put through the mangle, we still, against all the odds, hold on to the idea that a cinema which will express the histories, landscapes and characters of our collective dreams can exist. The way to begin to chart a map of this *terra incognita* is by exploring in more depth some of the areas touched on in the book's introduction: patterns of development and production finance; cinema's cultural relationship with the theatrical and literary establishments; the institutional and structural relationship between cinema and television; the linguistic and economic ties which bind us to a narrative model derived from US cinema. The problem with *Take Ten* is that it lined up the wrong shot in the first place.

Innocence lost and found

Annette Kuhn

Behind the Mask of Innocence: Films of Social Conscience in the Silent Era

Kevin Brownlow, Jonathan Cape, £35, 624pp

As a girl in the early 20s my mother saw a film the ads proclaimed "every man and woman should see". Screenings were segregated – males one day, females the next – and entry was restricted to the over-sixteens. The film began with a nursemaid meeting a man in a park; he had a spot on his lip. They met a few more times; he kissed her. Both later became ill, went blind, lost their hair, and eventually died. The film, about "something which was never mentioned", belonged to the spate of propaganda features about VD in circulation around the time of the First World War.

Behind the Mask of Innocence, the third and final volume of Kevin Brownlow's history of silent cinema, discusses the many films with a message about burning issues of the day – crime, prostitution, immigration, birth control,

Resurrected: a glimpse of a forgotten past from 'The Passaic Textile Strike', 1926



industrial unrest – which were made during the silent era, most of them before the mid-20s. His broad definition of the "social film" allows the author the freedom to trawl widely across many types of movie. But even so, this is not an exhaustive account (pressure of space imposed some unfortunate omissions – films about blacks, for instance).

Brownlow has been indefatigable in his searches in archives: it was only on locating a film he regarded as particularly important to his project (*The Passaic Textile Strike*, 1926) that he felt able finally to draw a line under a decade of research. Nevertheless, many of the films could not be found and could only be reconstructed from ancillary sources such as trade papers and Brownlow's own interviews with survivors of the era. The quotations from reviews and other contemporary writings are both revealing and entertaining, particularly the Pennsylvania censor's description of Lois Weber's lofty tract on birth control, *Where Are My Children?* (1916), as "unspeakably vile... not fit for decent people to see".

The book is a survey rather than a treatise: films are discussed title by title and more or less independently of one another. And the lack of a user-friendly structure for this wealth of material makes it difficult to read in a sustained way. Nevertheless, though there is no pretence of offering a social history, the social historian of cinema is presented with plenty of grist in the form of source material for particular films, easily accessible via an excellent index. It would have been a better reference resource, however, had it provided information about the whereabouts of surviving films.

Behind the Mask of Innocence leaves one with a sense of how different

silent cinema was from what is perceived as the 'classical' norm, and with sadness that so much of this inheritance is gone forever – with, precisely, nostalgia for lost innocence. But if the book ensures wider awareness of the social film, and if it should bring to light one or two 'lost' films, its achievement will have been considerable.

Public service, private views

Nicholas Garnham

A Social History of British Broadcasting Vol. 1 1922–1931: Serving the Nation

Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, Basil Blackwell, £30, 400pp

The British Press and Broadcasting since 1945

Colin Seymour-Ure, Basil Blackwell, £25, 142pp

These two books look back from what they see as the end of the classic era of broadcasting, an era marked by the progressive social, cultural and political dominance of a limited number of centrally regulated, national, general-interest broadcasting channels. They attempt to understand the extent, nature and historical significance of that dominance within Britain at the moment of transition to a new era of more fragmented, privatised and international media.

Seymour-Ure's book is one of a series designed for students in schools and higher education on aspects of post-war British history. He looks at the press and broadcasting in Britain since 1945, focusing on their structure, content, audiences and government policy towards them. His conclusions – that there has been a trend

towards concentration, conglomeration and internationalisation, putting questions of ownership and control squarely on the policy agenda; that the press has become less political; that there is continuing tension between politicians and broadcasters; that government policy has been confused and contradictory – are all familiar from his previous work.

Seymour-Ure shares with Scannell and Cardiff the assumption that the mass media are, in his words, “integrated into the rhythms and activities of society” and that they are “the chief means through which a society observes and evaluates itself”. But he makes no sustained attempt to substantiate that claim in the context of post-war Britain.

Scannell and Cardiff’s book is part of a series with a much more ambitious and original aim, namely to study “the ways in which a form and content for broadcasting was discovered in the day-to-day business of programme making” since the inception of British broadcasting in 1922, and to look at how that internal process was shaped by responding to the external pressures of politics and the audience. In particular this meant feeling out in any period the shifting thresholds of audience tolerance. This attention to the social experience and interests of a national audience makes broadcasting a key resource for social historians.

In this first volume, Scannell and Cardiff place the creation of public service broadcasting within the context of the contemporary problems of forging and operating a mass democracy. Their defence of the public service ideal and their stress on the way in which broadcasting created not just a general public, but a new access to “virtually the whole spectrum of public life” has more than historical significance in the context of today’s media policy debates. On this evidence, their work promises to change irreversibly our perception of both the history of British broadcasting and of its place in the wider political, cultural and social history of Britain.

Not the Lone Ranger: James Dean, right, and Montgomery Clift, below, the anguished dandies of 50s US cinema



RONALD GRANT

When boys won't be boys

Elizabeth Wilson

Rebel Males: Clift, Brando and Dean
Graham McCann, Hamish Hamilton,
£14.99, 207pp

Rebel Males falls somewhere between the Hollywood biography and the serious book of criticism. Mellifluously written in an accessible format, it tells the stories of the three great male screen stars of the 50s – Montgomery Clift, Marlon Brando and James Dean – and relates their screen personas to the sexual and social repressiveness of the Eisenhower/McCarthy period.

The book puts forward an interesting argument. Clift, Brando and Dean are seen as icons of a flawed, ambiguous masculinity that represented a disturbing challenge to the ideal of the period. This archetype, the 100 per cent pioneer-type macho hero or Lone Ranger model, had become fundamentally unsuited to a new world of urban conformity and suburban consumerism. Yet to admit this openly was too threatening to the collective male ego and even, for more obscure reasons, to the prevailing social order.

Clift, Brando and Dean, all of whom were bisexual, that is ultimately uncertain of their sexual identity, simultaneously affirmed and undermined the image which even today is at the core of American identity (you only have to think of George Bush and the Gulf War).

McCann contrasts their sense of anguished and vulnerable self-searching, disguised with a thin mask of

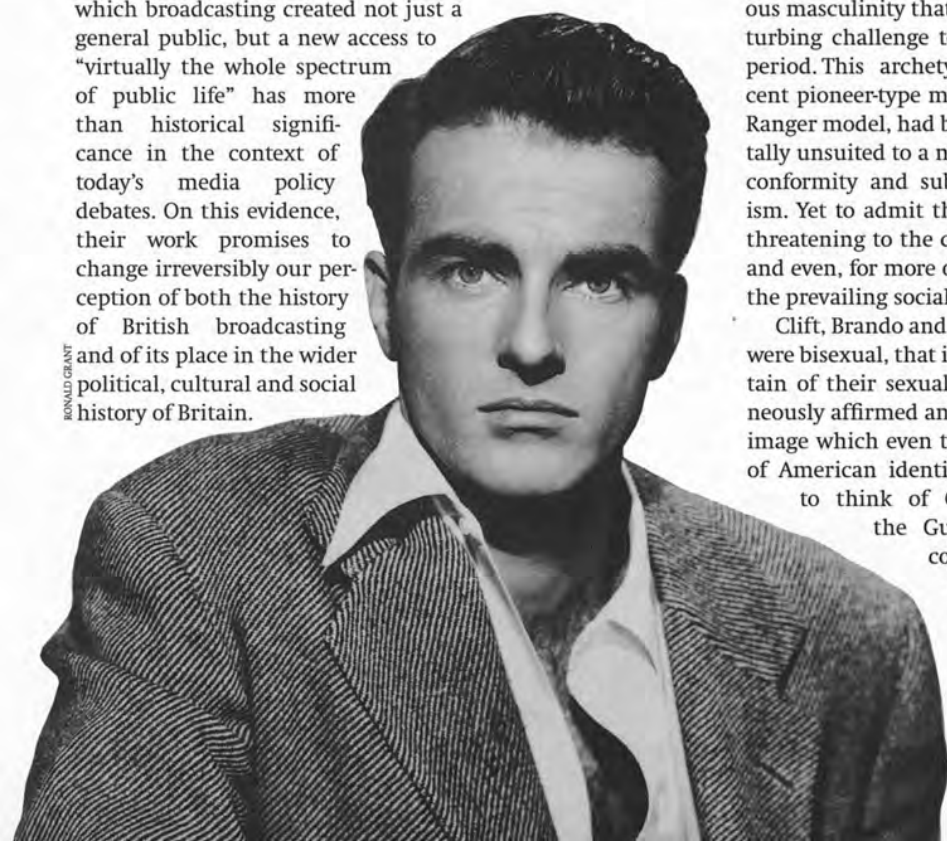
masculinity – “machismo as *maquilage*” – with the cool self-confidence of Hollywood heroes of the 30s and 40s.

In the 50s, wit, wisecrack and wonderful tailoring gave way to smouldering violence, torn T-shirts, leather jackets and the persona of the outlaw rebel, the marginal man, an American version of the European outsider. Lonely, brooding, his rebellion apolitical and individualistic, this was the dandy of Baudelaire reborn in the Method studio and then incongruously transplanted to Hollywood.

Hampered by the need to fill the book with biographical detail and tedious plot synopses, McCann is unfortunately unable to develop these insights. For example, he points to the way in which Dean and his screen persona were one, while the powerful screen presence of Brando and Clift arose in both cases from a tension between the image and the man. They acted, Dean was a star. It seems strange that McCann does not develop this by referring to Richard Dyer’s extensive writings on the complex relationship between the star and her/his image.

McCann also mentions in passing the waning of the female star in the 50s, or her transformation into a pale stereotype of womanhood. But one only has to think of *Annie Get Your Gun* to wonder if it was quite that simple. Here, the book would have benefited from relating the new and troubling images of flawed masculinity to fears about female sexuality during and after the Second World War.

The final chapter, assessing the legacy of Brando, Clift and Dean, is disappointingly superficial, insufficiently pointing up the differences between the 80s and 50s – that mythic period which this book does not succeed in celebrating and/or in taking apart.



RONALD GRANT

Black looks

Karen Alexander

Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics

bell hooks, Turnaround Press, £7.99, 248pp

Invisibility Blues: From Pop to Theory

Michele Wallace, Verso, £9.95, 267pp

The publication in Britain of books by black women theorists is a rare event and deserves to be celebrated. For bell hooks and Michele Wallace, cinema is only part of their wider critical concerns, which are as likely to focus on Michael Jackson as on post-modernist philosophers. When analysing films, both make use of specific situations – be it in the cinema's auditorium or cloakroom, in the schoolroom or on the street – to illuminate how race and gender influence responses to screen images.

Both approach the work of Spike Lee, for instance, through their personal experience of different viewers' contrasting perspectives. hooks' piece on *Do the Right Thing* describes "all the smug, self-satisfied white folks in theaters... just enjoying themselves watching a familiar spectacle, everybody letting their prejudices hang out, eruptions of racialized violence, culminating in the death of a young black man". This is contrasted with the response of young under-class black men, moved by the death of a character with whom they identify.

Wallace observes a young black woman arranging her hair in the bathroom of a Brooklyn cinema after a showing of Lee's *School Daze*: "I had the uneasy suspicion that the blonde hair-piece and the blonde dye had something to do with the curious process by which black female frustration becomes black female fashion. Which leads me to wonder: can black women survive another dose of Black Pride?"

Wallace's essay on Stephen Spielberg's *The Color Purple* unpicks the way the movie "juggles clichés and racial stereotypes fast and loose, until all signs of a black feminist agenda are banished, or ridiculed beyond repair". For her, the film confirms mainstream cinema's devotion to producing white films which appeal exclusively to white audiences – even when the movie's subject is blacks and the film is taken from a black woman's novel.

By contrast Isaac Julien's *Looking for Langston*, an experimental evocation of the poetry and ethos of gay black American writer Langston Hughes, is

praised by hooks, who describes "an edginess, a tension, a tightness in my body, experienced usually only when I am watching a thriller". Her response to the film inspires an eloquent exposition of cinema's potential to generate and express desire.

For both writers film offers a useful point of entry into popular culture. Nor is it a coincidence that the same films and film-makers crop up in both books. The high profile of British cinema in the US in the 80s explains why both hooks and Wallace compare US movies with those of Hanif Kureishi or of Sankofa's Maureen Blackwood and Isaac Julien. And Spike Lee's success is an issue for any critic interested in how images of blackness are received and reproduced by white consumers.

These books deal wittily and controversially with a wide range of ideas in black American politics and culture. That in itself is valuable, but Wallace and hooks go beyond this, offering acute observations on the British context as well as on Hollywood's forays into black experience (*Mississippi Burning*, *Bird*). And then there are their readings of exclusively white cultural products, as expressed in hooks' analysis of the way Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* "represents whiteness". A discussion of invisibility and exclusion is as important to the unseeing culture that excludes as to the excluded.



The power, Spike Lee's *'Do the Right Thing'*, left, and the cliché, *'The Color Purple'*, bottom

Shorts

So You Want to Make Movies: My Life as an Independent Film Producer

Sidney Pink, Pineapple Press, £11, 284pp

● Inside showbiz stories, told with pizzazz by an independent writer/producer/director who did it the hard way. Sidney Pink's chequered credits include associate producer on *Bwana Devil*, the first 3D colour film. He also claims to have given Dustin Hoffman his first big break in the low-budget caper *Madigan's Millions*.

Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century

Jonathan Crary, MIT Press, £17.95, 171pp

● An account of diverse developments in philosophy, science and an emerging mass visual culture in the nineteenth century. Art historian Crary discusses the stereoscope and other pre-cinematic apparatus, and their relationship to new notions of "the seeing body".

Robin Hood Prince of Thieves: The Official Movie Book

Garth Pearce, Hamlyn, £4.99, 80pp

● The introduction surveying the history of Robin Hood movies claims that the Sherwood swashbuckler has never flopped at the box office. Full colour pics of Costner in tights, looking dashing on horseback and romancing Maid Marian, plus snippets of the action and profiles of behind-the-camera personnel, make this an upmarket press kit for the film.

The Private World of Daphne Du Maurier

Martyn Shallcross, Robson Books, £14.95, 183pp

● A loyal and discreet biography of the reclusive novelist which pads out her story with anecdotes and interview material from stars who worked on film versions of *Rebecca*, *The Birds* and *Don't Look Now*. Disappointingly, Du Maurier's own world remains private.

Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory

Noël Carroll, Columbia University Press, £9.95, 262pp

● An impressive challenge to 'established' film theory from a committed thinker and writer. Carroll proposes an end to the abstract, all-encompassing language of many contemporary theorists in favour of a small-scale, piecemeal, informative approach.

Flamingoes in Orbit

Philip Ridley, Penguin, £4.99, 182pp

● First published in 1990, a paperback version of Wunderkind Ridley's dark, offbeat short stories exploring family relationships and death.

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Made during 1942, it was loathed by the Italian fascist government and was subsequently suppressed from international distribution by MGM. Only in 1966 did a US audience finally see the director's cut of 140 minutes. Acclaimed by some as the first example of 'neo-Realist' cinema, *Osessione* is, in the words of *The Times*, "a landmark in cinema history".

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Reviews

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Unsheltered: Sandrine Bonnaire



La Captive du désert (Captive of the Desert)

Certificate
PG

Distributor
Artificial Eye

Production Companies
La Sept/Roger
Diamantis/Films
Saint-André-des-
Arts/Jean-Bernard
Fetoux/SGGC/Jean-Luc
Larguler/Titane
With the
participation of
Centre National de la
Cinématographie and
the collaboration of
Fondation gan pour
le Cinéma

Producers
Pascale Dauman
Jean-Luc Ormires
Production Manager
Baudoin Capet

Unit Managers
Christian Leveaux
Jean-Jacques Bordier
Sylvie Dumoulin

Assistant Directors
Patrice Martineau
Kor Maman
Gaston Combasset

Director of Photography
Raymond Depardon
In colour

Camera Operator
Laurent Machuel

Editors
Roger Ikhiel
Camille Cotte
Pascale Charolais

Music
Jean-Jacques Lemtre

Costumes
Françoise Clavel

Titles
Ercidan

Sound Editors
Françoise Gedigier
Christelle Guyon

Sound Recordists
Claudine Nougaret
Sophie Chiabaut

Sound Re-recordist
Gérard Lamps

Sound Effects
Laurent Lévy
Pascale Mazière

Production Assistant
Sophie Barrat

Pilots
Philippe Houssemand
Jean-Claude Tornier
Jean-Jacques Galy

Subtitles
Ann Head
Laser Video Titres,
Paris

Cast
Sandrine Bonnaire
Frenchwoman

Dobi Kor
Fadi Taha
Dobi Wachink
Badei Barka
Atchi Wahi-ii
Daki Kor
Isai Kor
Mohammed Ixa
Brahim Barka
Hadji Azouma
Barkama Hadji
Sidi Hadji Maman
and the inhabitants
of Chirfa, Orida and
Djaba in Niger

9,110 feet
101 minutes

Subtitles

France 1990

Director: Raymond Depardon

● Niger, east of Tenere Desert.

A young Frenchwoman trails after a procession of Toubou nomads and their camels, her armed guard by her side. When they stop for rest, she is permitted to stop too, but always at a distance from the tribespeople, though provided with water and a little food. Sometimes they shelter near some stunted trees and when they reach an oasis, a tent of grass matting is built for her.

Asking for water to wash, she is shown where the tribeswomen have gone, to a spring some distance across the dunes. A sort of comradeship develops between her and the women, giving way to irritation when they approach her curiously, handling her belongings and repeatedly asking for medicine. On one occasion, a woman explains that her husband is a combatant, a leader, and that she has persuaded him to let her live.

The men depart – to distant grazing lands, the woman learns from two children, more friendly than the others and to whom she teaches a French song (most of the tribe know a little French). Discovering in which direction the frontier lies, she begins to make preparations for escape, secretly hoarding water. While the women are distracted by the return of their menfolk, she flees and is frightened when she hears shots. Thirst and weariness soon overtake her in a desert which to her is featureless. She is rescued by a boy from the tribe, and at the camp learns from the rebel leader that she is to be freed. He asks her to bear witness to their lack of schools or a hospital, and to the wickedness of their government. He tells her that the population are all united in admiration of her courage. The promised plane arrives for her

● Raymond Depardon is a news photographer of some commitment, founder of the Gamma agency and currently with Magnum. His films have included documentaries on Jan Palach and the situation in Chad, and he has published several collections of photographs. This latest film is based on a story he covered as a reporter, and Depardon twice interviewed ►



Culture to culture

Reviews

La Captive du désert
(Captive of the Desert)

◀ Françoise Claustre, the woman upon whose capture the film is based. It is not surprising that it is always remarkable to look at, or that Depardon has opted in retelling Claustre's story for a certain kind of journalistic realism, a literal faithfulness to Claustre's experience and to the experience of her captors. It is a realism marked by tact and restraint to a remarkable degree.

Little is said; frequently the tribespeople's conversation is left untranslated. Some rudimentary conversation is exchanged in French between captors and captive. The latter is allowed to reveal very little of herself and her identity in the wider world. We gather what we can from viewing the contents of her bag, emptied and searched through from time to time: some polaroids, a glossy magazine, the detritus of Western living. Sandrine Bonnaire responds by giving a performance which has its own bleak, pared-down integrity. Once again, as in Agnès Varda's *Vagabonde*, she is a wanderer, but here – as the climax reveals – never becoming more than what she is for her captors, just one Western woman, with all that implies of cultural and imperialistic baggage.

Her performance is literally and emotionally a guarded one, as she goes about the small rituals of existence. Her foreignness and intrusiveness are everywhere evident, particularly as she first trails into view at the end of a long line of camels and people, her uncovered head and bare arms and legs marking her out at once. Of prime importance is the configuration of the desert itself, by no means either empty or featureless.

But what is most important about *La Captive du désert* is what in fact is left out. Depardon deliberately plays against a whole collection of expectations nurtured by such familiar Western genres as the desert romance and melodrama, or the adventure story of imprisonment, debasement, resistance and escape (although the prisoner here does attempt an escape, it is a fairly low-key and botched affair), and even the ethnographical film with its meticulous explanation of one culture by and for another.

Depardon made his film on location in the desert over a period of months, just south of the tropic of cancer. A landing strip was built so food could be flown in for the ten French crew members and the fifteen Touaregs. If there is a 'gap' in the film, then it may be precisely this kind of information that is needed to fill it. The director's openness of approach could have borne the inclusion of something at least of the logistical and cultural exchanges involved in the film's production.

Verina Glaessner

Daddy Nostalgie (These Foolish Things)

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Gala
Production Companies
Cléa Productions/
Little Bear/Solyfic/
Eurisma
Producer
Adolphe Viezzi
Production Manager
Yvon Crenn
Assistant Directors
Tristan Ganne
Albane Guilhe
Screenplay
Colo Tavernier
O'Hagan
Dialogue
Colo Tavernier
O'Hagan
Bertrand Tavernier
Director of Photography
Denis Lenoir
CinemaScope
Colour
Eastman Colour
Camera Operator
Agnès Godard
Editor
Ariane Boeglin
Art Director
Jean-Louis Poveda
Set Design
Robert Le Corre
Music
Antoine Duhamel
Music Performed by
Piano: Jimmy Rowles
Bass: Ron Carter
Cello:
Jean-Charles Capon
Guitar:
Philippe Catherine
Clarinet:
Jacques Di Donato
Louis Clavis
Song
"These Foolish Things" by Eric Maschwitz, Jack Strachey-Lonk, performed by Jane Birkin, Jimmy Rowles
Costume Design
Christian Gasc
Make-up Artist
Thi-Loan Nguyen
Title Design
Eurotitres
Sound Editors
Claudine Dumoulin
Khadicha Bariha
Sound Recordists
Michel Desrois
Sound Re-recordists
Gérard Lamps
Williams Schmit
Sound Effects
Jérôme Lévy
Alain Lévy

Cast
Dirk Bogarde
Daddy
Jane Birkin
Caroline
Odette Laure
Miche
Emmanuelle Bataille
Juliette
Charlotte Kady
Barbara
Michele Minns
Caroline as a child
Sophie Dalezio
Sylvie Segalas
Nurses
Hélène Lefumat
Woman at Hospital
Andrée Duranson
Yvonne
Raymond Defendente
Jimmy
Fabrice Roux
Fisherman
Gilbert Guerrero
Waiter
Louis Ducreux
Old Man in Metro

9,593 feet
107 minutes

Subtitles

France 1990

Director: Bertrand Tavernier

● Caroline, a screenwriter with a son, Martin, is living apart from her husband Bernard in Paris. Shortly after a dream about taking her father, always referred to as Daddy, on a world tour, she hears from her mother, Miche, that he is in intensive care following an operation. She travels down to Bandol on the Côte d'Azur to be with her parents. Daddy starts to recover, and comes out of hospital, though often hiding his physical pain.

Miche is over-protective, and nags Daddy when he breaks his diet, but Caroline encourages him in his relaxed attitude. Nationality (Daddy is English, and he and Caroline usually speak that language together), politics, religion and Caroline's divorce (Miche is a practising Catholic) all cause tension within the family at different times. They also talk about the past, and the complexities of their relationships. It is revealed in flashback that Caroline often felt left out by her parents' loving relationship, and that her creativity was not appreciated. Though, in London, Miche and Daddy were able to confront the war with gaiety, his absences, travelling on behalf of Yardley's, seem to have caused some estrangement.

Caroline is meanwhile under pressure to return to Paris to look after Martin, so Bernard can go on a trip which he has twice put off. Eventually, she learns from the visiting nurse, Barbara, that Daddy has only a short time to live, although she denies this to Miche. The latter says that she'll throw herself off the cliff if anything happens to Daddy, and Caroline invokes the sanctions of Catholicism against suicide.

Nevertheless, after a day trip to Cannes, and a final heart-to-heart with Daddy about life, relationships and the past, Caroline has to return to her often lonely life in Paris. Daddy leaves a loving message on her answering machine, but shortly afterwards she receives a telegram saying he's dead. A train strike prevents her from leaving that night and there is no plane until the morning, so she wanders alone through the city.

● Like *Sunday in the Country*, *These Foolish Things* is a charming film, but no more. Tavernier relies on the insights of the writing and the delicacy and conviction of his excellent trio of principals to make his points about family life. There are no profound passions or deep revelations, only transitory shifts in emotion, and the occasional complicity of Daddy and Caroline in an alliance from which Miche is



Family turns: Dirk Bogarde, Jane Birkin

left out, as if to recompense the daughter for her comparable feelings of exclusion as a child.

Certainly the film is touching and honest in its account of family interaction, but the cycle of confrontations and reconciliations is too repetitive to sustain the narrative. Daddy is a flirt and a charmer, particularly when he's talking about his failings ("I was spoilt rotten. And I absolutely loved it"). One can see how his character may have helped to stimulate the embryonic writer in young Caroline (he made her "laugh and dream") but, hard though it tries, the film fails to generate a sense of genuine loss when he dies. Perhaps this is the point: that we're all a bit bland? That genuine emotional contact and intensity of feeling do not exist, particularly with a character desperate to hide his sentimentality?

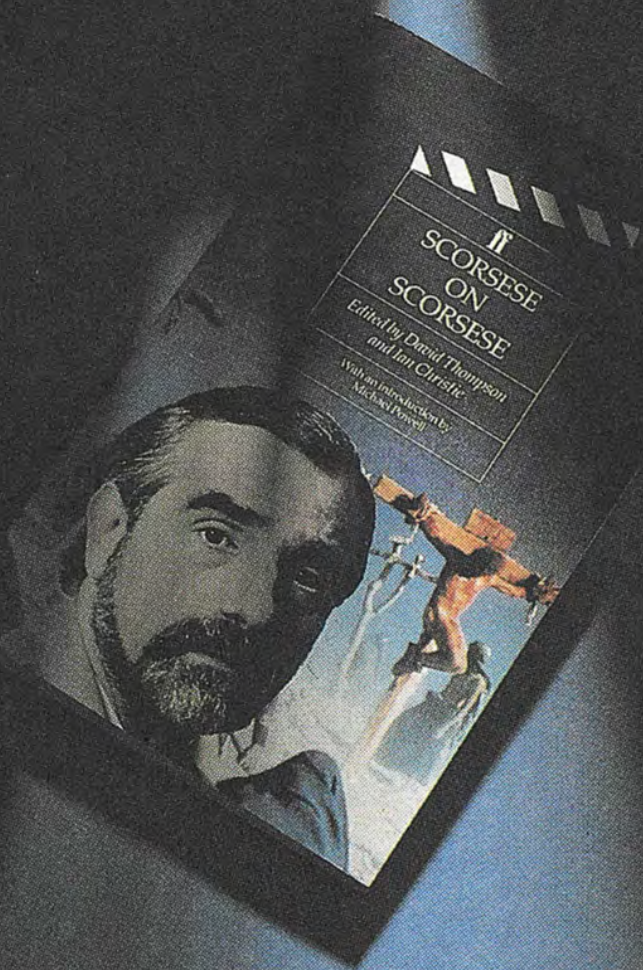
Honest though such an attitude may be, it leaves a sense of dissatisfaction; one shares the experiences articulated by the film, but learns nothing from them, comes away with no new insight. Throughout, Tavernier operates certain shifts in point of view. These occur most noticeably at the opening and the close, when what is effectively Caroline's narration is spoken not by her but in a male voice-over. Such shifts are presumably an attempt to designate the shared nature of certain experiences, to articulate their human generality in relation to a particular individual consciousness.

Though the formal device used to convey this is understandable in relation to the biographical origins of the film (the script was Colo Tavernier O'Hagan's account of her parents, but took on new emotional meaning for Tavernier after the death of his own father prior to filming), its effect is too schematically personal to be emotionally convincing.

James Leahy

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Don't Tell Her It's Me

Certificate
12
Distributor
Rank
Production Company
Sovereign Pictures
Executive Producers
John Daly
Derek Gibson
Producers
George Braunstein
Ron Hamady
Associate Producer
Chris Coles
Production
Co-ordinator
Mary K. Perko
Unit Production
Manager
Chris Coles
Location Manager
Jerry Ariganello
Post-production
Supervisor
Randy Thornton
Post-production
Co-ordinator
Laura Vineyard
Casting
Director:
Karen Rea
Associate:
Doreen Lane
Extras:
Lorraine Young
Assistant Directors
Scott Easton
Maggie Parker
Screenplay
Sarah Bird
Based on her novel
The Boyfriend School
Director of
Photography
Reed Smoot
Colour
CFI
Editor
Marshall Harvey
Production
Designers
Linda Pearl
Associate:
Daryl Kerrigan
Set Decorator
Debra Schutt
Set Dressers
Key:
Dwain F. Wilson
On-set:
J. Durden-Arbuckle
Special Effects
Co-ordinator
Rick Josephsen
Cartoons/Characters
Robert Ariail

Music
Michael Gore
Additional:
Robert Randles
John Hiler
Pat Regan
Walt Vincent
Music Director
Allan Wilson
Music Co-ordinator
Paul Talkington
Music performed by
The Graunke
Symphony Orchestra
Orchestrations
Homer Denison
Music Supervisor
Stamp Inc
Music Editor
Robert Randles
Mark E. Hollingsworth
Songs
"Don't Tell Her It's Me" by David Batteau,
André Fischer,
performed by Michael
Ruff; "My Way" by
Anka, Revaux,
François, Thibault;
"El Pueblo Altano" by
Hipolito Puentes,
performed by
Mariachi Uclatlan;
"Je veux vivre dans ce
rêve" by Charles
Gounod, performed
by Patricia Smith;
"Flames d'enfer"
(traditional) words by
Michael Doucet,
performed by
Beausoleil; "Talk to
Me" by David Batteau,
Mark Leonard,
performed by David
Batteau; "Don't Ask
Me Why" by David
Batteau, Cory Lerois,
performed by Dee Dee
Belson
Costume Design
Carol Wood
Wardrobe
Supervisor
Susan Douglas
Costumer
Linda Thayer
Make-up Artists
Carla Palmer
Special Make-up
Effects
Andy Schoneberg
Title Design
Neal Thompson
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Supervising Sound
Editor
John Brasher
Sound Editor
Douglas Axtell
Supervising ADR
Editor
Sarah Brady
ADR Editor
Douglas Reed
Sound Recordists
Gregory T. Cheever
Music:
Alan Snelling
Ultra Stereo
Consultant:
John Lawson

Foley Recordist
Andy Napell
Sound Re-recordists
Andy D'Addario
Jim Bolt
Tom Moore
William McCaughey
Sound Effects
Editors
Adrianne Marfiak
Mark Cookson
Sound Effects
Production
Assistants
Mary Ellen Sullivan
Robin Allen
Jamie Elliott
Lark Asbelle
Michael Scott Reid
Stunt Co-ordinator
Chris Howell
Stunts
Keii Johnston
Janet Brady
Jeannie Epper
Tony Epper
Animal Trainer
William Grisco

Cast
Shelley Long
Lizzie Potts
Steve Guttenberg
Gus Kubiak
Jami Gertz
Emily Pear
Kyle MacLachlan
Trout
Madchen Amick
Mandy
Kevin Scannell
Mitchell
Perry Anzilotti
Giovanni
Nada Despotovich
Lolly
Beth Grant
Babette
Don Hood
Deputy
Bill Applebaum
Man in Bar
O'Neil Compton
Gas Station Attendant
Ron Orbach
Bobbi
Stacey Areheart
Teenage Girl
Bert Hogue
Security Guard
Michelle Torres
Ticket Agent
William "Birdman"
Thomas
1st Man in Line
Sam Youngblood
2nd Man in Line
Laura Alcalde
Barmaid
Kenneth Graham
Lawyer
Melanie A. Gendron
Receptionist
Bonnie Terheggen
Woman in Bar
John "Speed" Finlay
Biker
Sally Lund
Caroline Paige Lund
Annabelle
Jeannie Epper
Woman Thug
Tony Epper
Gas Station Thug
Frances "Jessie"
Krosnick
Waiting Man
Joe Mowbray
Boy on Bike

9,160 feet
102 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Malcolm Mowbray

North Carolina. Bald and bloated after extensive radiation treatment for Hodgkin's disease, cartoonist Gus Kubiak is depressed about his prospects of finding a girlfriend. Gus' sister, romantic novelist Lizzie Potts, decides to take a hand and selects as his prospective partner Emily Pear, a journalist struggling to disentangle herself from an on-off relationship with her editor, Trout. Interviewing Lizzie, Emily expresses the opinion that the heroes in her books are unrealistic and that she would prefer a down-to-earth man to a romantic rogue.

However, at a disastrous introductory meal, Emily does not respond to Gus' decency and is tempted to get back together with Trout. Under Lizzie's tutelage, Gus is transformed from a geek into a hunk, and he adopts the persona of Lobo Maranga, a rootless drifter from New Zealand. As Lobo, Gus saves Emily from harm during a gas-station hold-up, and Emily is duly smitten. She tracks Lobo down and pursues him, even introducing him to her friend Lizzie, who encourages Gus, against his will, to continue the imposture.

Trout, keen to secure investment in his newspaper from his new girlfriend's rich father, makes a final break with Emily. Gus turns up to admit the truth, but Emily takes Lobo to bed. The next morning, Gus reveals the deception and Emily throws him out. Lizzie subsequently tells Emily that the heartbroken Gus has decided to make a fresh start in New York. Realising that she loves Gus, Emily rushes to the airport, where Gus is actually about to take a weekend trip to Kalamazoo. They leave together.

Having established a reputation with the precise social observation of *A Private Function*,

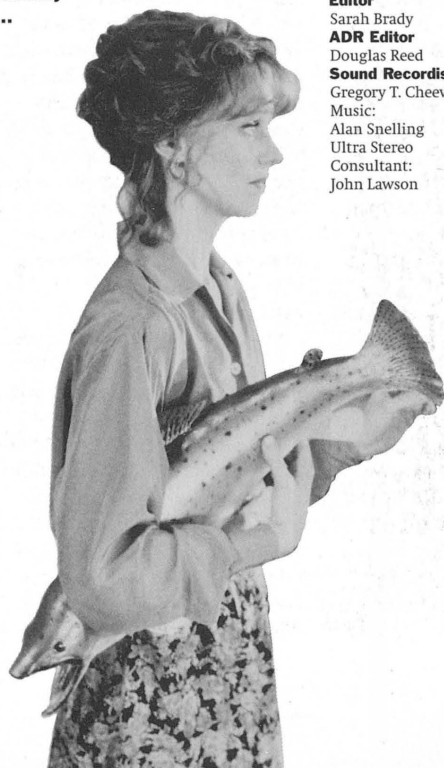
Malcolm Mowbray, here following up the unimpressive *Out Cold*, has become the most depressing British casualty in Hollywood. From comedy of embarrassment to embarrassing comedy, Mowbray – whose debut feature of course benefited from Alan Bennett's pointed screenplay – has turned into a fudge-hearted sub-Blake Edwards. *Don't Tell Her It's Me* takes the germ of an amusing notion about the division between realistic and fantastic romantic hero and hammers it painfully into the ground.

The first stretch of the film is a curious mix of tastelessness and Shelley Long's patented loony act, augmented by the antics of a husband and child who endeavour to match la Long in fumbling eccentricity. As in Mowbray's earlier films, food is an especial obsession, the disastrous family dinner featuring a jellyfish salad that appears to be still alive and drives Emily vomiting into the bathroom. Steve Guttenberg, who is initially buried under prosthetic flab and the bald cap he last wore in *The Day After*, spends the rest of the film doing a bizarre and cartoonish New Zealand accent.

At its heart, the film even goes back on its humane notion that nice guys are preferable to he-man heroes, in that there is no eleventh-hour scene in which Emily admits that she prefers Gus to Lobo. The suggestion is that the whole imposture – which has only been possible because Gus is able to transform from a physical grotesque to a pin-up physique – has in fact worked, and that the new Gus is more Lobo than himself. With a talented cast strangled by script and direction, the romantic-misunderstanding storyline is bland enough for a TV movie, and stretched to inordinate length by predictable plot devices.

Kim Newman

Everything is
food: Shelley
Long...



... and fantasy (Jami Gertz, Steve Guttenberg)

Reviews

Daddy Nostalgia
(These Foolish Things)
Don't Tell Her It's Me

**Original
US title:
Taking Care
of Business**

Certificate
12
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Hollywood Pictures
In association with
Silver Screen Partners
IV
Executive Producer
Paul Mazursky
Producer
Geoffrey Taylor
Co-producer
Duncan Henderson
Associate Producer
Elizabeth Sayre
Production Associate
Mauri Syd Gayton
Production Co-ordinator
Tom C. Peitzman
Unit Production Manager
Duncan Henderson
Location Manager
John Panzarella
Casting
Lynn Stalmaster
Additional:
Dan Guerrero
Extras:
Central Casting
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
Alan B. Curtiss
Michele Panelli-
Venetis
Matthew Dunne
Seth Cirkler
Brian T. Fong
Screenplay
Jill Mazursky
Jeffrey Abrams
Director of Photography
David M. Walsh
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operators
Michael Nash
B. Steve Bridge
Opticals
Buena Vista Visual
Effects Group
Editor
William Reynolds
Production Designer
Jon Hutman
Set Design
Charles William Breen
Set Decorators
Donald Krafft
Linda Sphaeris
Scenic Artist
Walter Zingewicz
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Richard Ratliff
Music
Stewart Copeland
Music Co-producer
Jeff Seitz
Music Editor
Michael Dittrock
Songs
"Takin' Care of
Business" by Randy
Bachman, performed
by Bachman-Turner
Overdrive; "Take Me
Out to the Ballgame"
by Albert Von Tilzer,
Jack Norworth; "Mean
Old World" by and
performed by T-Bone
Walker; "Yo Baby Yo"
by Baber, Lewis,
Mallison, Isacs,
Constant, performed
by Party Posse

Costume Design
Marilyn Matthews
Costumers
Margo Baxley
Cheryl Beasley
Blackwell
Leslie Weir
Glenn Wright
Make-up Artists
Richard Arrington
Additional:
Deborah Lamia
Denaver
Titles
Design:
Wayne Fitzgerald
Blackwell
Animation:
Kurtz & Friends
Supervising Sound Editor
John Leveque
Sound Editors
Richard E. Yawn
Bob Bradshaw
Richard Burton
Jeremy Gordon
Fred Judkins
Donald L. Warner
Hector Gika
John Kwiatkowski
Supervising ADR Editor
Becky Sullivan-
Coblentz
Supervising Foley Editor
Scott D. Jackson
Foley Editors
Shawn Sykora
Sound Recordists
Jerry Jost
Music:
Jeff Seitz
Foley Recordist
Tim Hoggatt
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Richard R. Portman
Chris Carpenter
Larry Stensvold
Gary Alexander
Sound Effects
Gary Bluffer
Foley Artists
Gary Hecker
Katie Rowe
Stunt Co-ordinator
Joe Dunne
Stunts
Daniel W. Barringer
Clifford Happy
Gilbert Combs
Steve Hulin
Ousaun Elam
Brian John Williams
James Ortega
Eric Chambers
Kerrie Cullen
Helicopter Pilot
James W. Gavin

Cast
James Belushi
Jimmy Dworski
Charles Grodin
Spencer Barnes
Anne DeSalvo
Debbie Lipton
Loryn Locklin
Jewel
Stephen Elliott
Walter Bentley
Hector Elizondo
Warden
Veronica Hamel
Elizabeth
Mako
Sakamoto
Gates McFadden
Diane Connors
John de Lancie
Ted
Thom Sharp
Mike
Ken Foree
J.B.
J.J.
Le Bradford
André Rosey Brown
Heavy G
Terrence E. McNally
Hamilton
Lenny Hicks
Joe Bratcher
Mediators
Burke Byrnes
Tony Auer
Prison Guards

Marte Boyle Slout
Brenda
John P. Menese
Chauffeur
Stanley DeSantis
Car Rental Man
Tommy Morgan
Buddy Daniels
Gang Members
Chris Barnes
Luggage Boy
Jill Johnson
Tennis Court Girl
Tom Nolan
Mr Wright
Marjorie Bransfield
Tennis Club
Receptionist
Selma Archerd
Woman in Pro Shop
Joe Lerer
Ira Breen
Howie Guma
Sakamoto's Assistant
Elisabeth Barrett
Diane's Assistant
Tom Taglang
Waiter
Michele Harrell
High Quality
Receptionist
Stu Nahan
Radio Reporter
Andrew Amador
Sandra Eng
Prison Reporters
Louisa Abernathy
Guard
Michael McNab
Main Gate Guard
Michael Kinney
Malibu Jail Guard
Leslie Suzan
Malibu Jail Woman
Janet Julian
Woman on Plane
Dan Kern
Snooty Man
David Ruprecht
Yuppie Dad
Whitby Hertford
Yuppie Son
Joe Torre
Joe Torre
Baldo Dal Ponte
National Anthem
Singer
Mark Grace
Mark Grace
Bert Blyleven
Bert Blyleven
T. Rodgers
Stadium Guard
Hank Robinson
Umpire
Michael Blue
Ron Chenier
Beach House Cops
Darlene J. Hall
Jeep Driver
Jacqueline
Alexandra Citron
Kristen Amber
Citron
Twins

9,678 feet
108 minutes

Well placed:
James Belushi

USA 1990

Director: Arthur Hiller

Car thief Jimmy Dworski escapes from prison one day before his scheduled release to attend the World Series in nearby Los Angeles. Meanwhile, Spencer Barnes, a workaholic Chicago advertising executive, abandons a planned trip with his wife to spend a weekend in Los Angeles securing a prized Japanese account. Jimmy reaches the airport just as Spencer, newly arrived, leaves his Filofax at a phone booth.

Snatching it up, Jimmy discovers a key to the Malibu home of Spencer's boss Walter Bentley. While Jimmy savours the beach house's luxuries, Spencer, driving a battered rented car, is mugged and dumped into garbage. He is rescued by Debbie Lipton, a lovestruck old acquaintance he met on the plane, who drives him to the exclusive club where he was due to play tennis with Mr Sakamoto of High Quality Foods. But Jimmy, posing as Spencer, has already played – and won; Spencer is thrown out as an imposter.

At the crucial meeting with Sakamoto, Jimmy infuriates the company's head of US advertising, Diane Connors, with his unbridled thoughts on their low-grade products; he then leaves for a date with Jewel, Walter Bentley's alluring daughter. Debbie retrieves Spencer from the police after he is arrested for breaking into the Malibu house. Back in Malibu, Spencer threatens to destroy Jimmy's baseball tickets unless he explains the deception to High Quality Foods; however, after being berated from Chicago by

Bentley, Spencer quits his job in disgust. Jimmy takes Spencer to the baseball game, where they are forced to flee once the police spot Jimmy among the crowds. After helping Jimmy slip back into prison in disguise, Spencer meets him at the gate once he is officially released. Sakamoto phones to offer them Diane's job, which they accept, though Spencer first plans a holiday with his long-suffering wife.

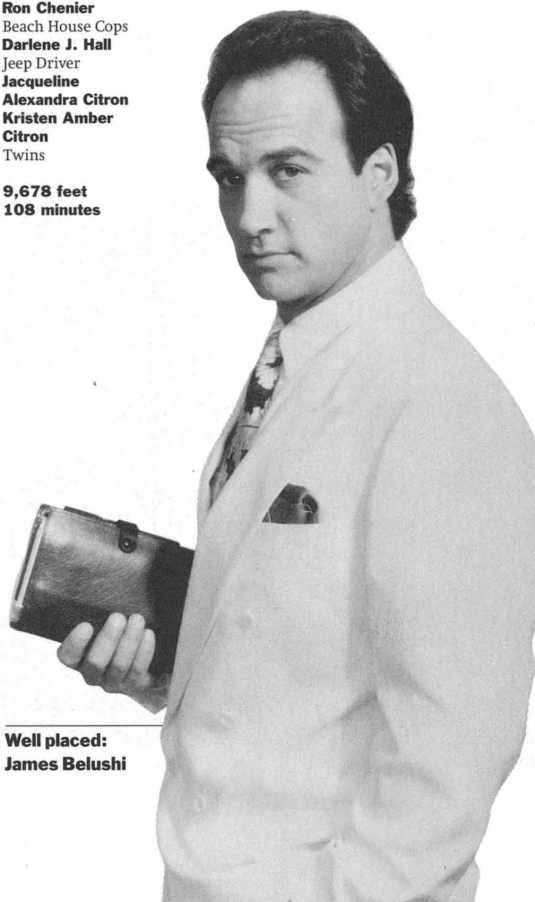
Product placement reaches a new level when a film's very title is a registered trademark. Arthur Hiller's comedy sallied forth in American cinemas as *Taking Care of Business*; for Britain, an earlier title was resurrected, crowning a script where the loose-leafed wonder is constantly mentioned and thrust before the camera. "Oh my God", cries Charles Grodin's stuffy, obsessive advertising executive when he discovers the loss of his personal organiser, "My life is in there!" The film pursues the simple comic ploy of letting a wildly different breed – a brash felon with thirty-seven car thefts to his name – take over the life along with the Filofax.

At least, it should be a simple ploy. But Jill Mazursky and Jeffrey Abrams' script drags its heels and wanders down so many dead ends that the potential is frittered away. In the opening stretches, time is wasted on familiar prison comedy as the bumptious James Belushi, desperate to use the World Series tickets he has won in a radio contest, spars with Hector Elizondo's vindictive warden. Afterwards, the film dallies with lukewarm jibes at monied Los Angeles – leftovers, almost, from a film by Mazursky senior (Paul Mazursky, indeed, serves as executive producer).

Later, the script sometimes appears to be more concerned with making its characters better people than making them funny: the creaky, preachy scene where Charles Grodin reaches his road to Damascus and quits his advertising job is certainly the film's low point. The film-makers then have American baseball to celebrate. That done, there is little time to tie up loose ends and get Belushi back to prison: the last ten minutes of the film pass in a silly, unseemly rush.

Grodin works hard to embellish the weak material, but his pairing with Belushi produces none of the intricate by-play that Grodin and De Niro generated in *Midnight Run*. The story, for one thing, keeps this odd couple apart for too long, and Belushi's swaggering quickly becomes a bore. Hiller brings his usual dogged persistence to bear, but it would take an alchemist's touch to turn *Filofax* into comic gold.

Geoff Brown



La Gloire de mon père (My Father's Glory)

Certificate
U
Distributor
Palace Pictures
Production Companies
Gaumont
International
Production/
Production de La
Guéville/
TFI Films Production
With the
participation of
Centre National de la
Cinématographie
Producer
Alain Poiré
Production Managers
Marc Goldstaub
Guy Azzi
Casting
Gérard Moulevrier
Extras:
Brigitte Mac Kellar
Assistant Directors
Jean-Claude Ventura
Gilles Banier
Daniel Ziskind
Luc Etienne
Screenplay
Lucette Andrei
Based on the work of
Marcel Pagnol
Adapted by
Jérôme Tonnerre
Louis Nucera
Yves Robert
Director of Photography
Robert Alazraki
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Jean-César Chiabaut

Camera Operator
Gilbert Duhalde
Editor
Pierre Gillette
Art Director
Jacques Dugied
Set Design
Chantal Giuliani
Set Decorators
Jean-Claude Bourdin
Dominique Roubaud
Christian Portal
("Coyotte")
Alain Racine
Michel Heulin
Martin Drescher
Special Effects
André Atellian
Music
Vladimir Cosma
Costume Design
Agnès Nègre
Costumers
Dominique Gay
Myriem Boucher
Dominique Roulance
Wardrobe
André Atellian
Key Make-up Artists
Maryse Félix
Monique Huylebroek
Sound Editor
Olivier Villette
Sound Recordist
Alain Sempé
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Claude Villand
Bernard Leroux
Sound Re-recording
Gilbert Crozet
Sound Effects
Jérôme Lévy
Alain Lévy
Educational Adviser
Pierre Barnley
Production Assistant
Danièle David
Subtitles
Ian Burley
Loser, Video Titles,
Paris

Cast
Philippe Caubère
Joseph Pagnol
Nathalie Roussel
Augustine Pagnol
Didier Pain
Uncle Jules
Thérèse Liotard
Aunt Rose
Julien Ciamaca
Marcel age 11
Victorien Delamare
Paul age 5
Joris Molinas
Lili des Bellons
Paul Crauchet
Mond des
Parpaillouins
Pierre Maguelon
François
Michel Modo
Postman
Victor Garrivier
Priest
Jean Rougerie
Secondhand Dealer
Raoul Curet
Monsieur Vincent
René Loyon
Monsieur Besson
Michele Loubet
Mademoiselle
Guimard
Maxime Lombard
Monsieur Arnaud
Benoît Martin
Marcel age 5
Benjamin Detriche
Paul age 3
Jean-Pierre Darras
Voice of Marcel

9,955 feet
111 minutes

Subtitles

France 1990

Director: Yves Robert

● Aubagne, Provence, 1895.
Joseph Pagnol, a young schoolteacher, proudly informs his pupils: "I'm a father, and it's a boy". His wife Augustine often parks the little infant, Marcel, in Joseph's classes, and one day his precocious reading from the blackboard astounds everybody; when, eventually, his turn for reading lessons comes, he has to occupy his mind by telling himself stories. With Joseph's promotion, the family moves to Marseilles, where his mother's spinster sister, Aunt Rose, walks Marcel in the park, soon finding an admirer, a fat but lively gentleman, who becomes Uncle Jules.

Marcel acquires a younger brother, Paul, and then a baby sister; the boys, allowed to watch her breastfeed, become disconcerted, brood upon theories of birth via the navel, and expect their baby cousin, because his parents' ages total 67, to be born with a long white beard. The two families rent a holiday villa near La Treille, and Marcel, while relishing the delights of a country summer, is nervous that his father will be humiliated through his unfamiliarity with rural skills. However, Joseph excels in his first game of town-square bowls; the amiable curé doesn't even notice his anti-clerical rudeness; and his shooting lessons from Jules culminate in both men nearly bagging the timid maid, first in the toilet, then behind a clothes line.

Marcel and Paul roam the countryside, among their encounters a tramp who accuses them of stealing

his butterflies. Marcel becomes obsessed about joining his father and uncle on their first long hunting trip, without Paul, but the two men manage to slip off without him. He follows via a short cut but, trying to help his father, distracts him into missing a fine hare. Lost, he is saved by Lili des Bellons, a boy from a village so poor that its inhabitants are tacitly allowed to poach. Providentially, Marcel helps his father retrieve two royal partridge, and the curé ceremoniously photographs Joseph with trophies.

Lili having deepened his knowledge of country ways, Marcel is shocked to hear his family denigrate rural life (save his mother, who understands him); though they're only consoling themselves for the imminent return to town, he runs off, vowing to become a rustic hermit. But fear of night owls pecking out his eyes while he's asleep inspires him to spin Lili a yarn about mountain springs yielding too little water to wash away germs (a recent scientific discovery). He hurries home, where his parents tactfully feign ignorance of his farewell note.

● This delightful, if winsome, film was inspired by the first of three volumes of Marcel Pagnol's autobiography; a companion film, *Le Château de ma mère*, covers the second. The books' English title, *The Days Were Too Short*, suggests this film's main concern, to evoke the halcyon days of a happy childhood, and the non-cinéophile might never realise that young Pagnol became a true *auteur* of cinema, as determinedly independent as Rossellini (who acknowledged his anticipation of ▶



Like a river... Joris Molinas, Julien Ciamaca

Reviews

Filofax
La Gloire de mon père
(My Father's Glory)



Far from the rest of the industry...

◀ neo-realism) and Welles (who much admired his way with actors). A schoolteacher, like Joseph, he turned playwright in the 20s, and then film writer-producer-director, even building his own independent studio, far away from the rest of the industry, near these very landscapes, running it in a famously relaxed, commensalist, fashion.

From the *Marius* trilogy (1930-36) until the mid-50s, his films expressed his mellow insights into France's provincial and peasant tap-roots. In 1933, he founded *Cahiers du Film* to defend his 'cinématurgie', well-constructed drama with unabashedly copious dialogue, against critics who, clinging to silent-era formalist purisms, deprecated 'filmed theatre'. His cinematically casual style stemmed from his faith in the richness of the pro-filmic, his proto-Bazinian love of the world *before* the camera (in both senses of 'before'). It relished not just words-and-drama, but actors like Raimu, as congenial co-auteurs, and location landscapes, whence his anticipation of neo-realism.

The recent success of Claude Berri's two-part remake of a Pagnol

novel, *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des Sources*, testifies, along with Chabrol's *Cheval d'orgueil*, Olmi's *The Tree of Wooden Clogs*, Polanski's *Tess*, and works by Berger and Tanner, to a revitalised respect for peasant cultures, long patronised by modernism, e.g., by Bolshevik eulogies of collectivisation.

Connoisseurs of French cinema are surely meant to recognise some seeds of Pagnol's films: the family secrets and springs of the Florette saga, the schoolmaster-priest feud in *La Femme du boulanger*. Uncle Jules here could be a Raimu prototype. The reading theme and the relish of dialect words prefigure Pagnol's then-unfashionable love of 'talkies'. A reference to Latin recalls his Vergilian eclogues, and the verse play about Catullus which he obsessively rewrote between the ages of 15 and 27. The eyes motif, and Marcel's epiphanic veneration of the hurricane lamp, could qualify as counterpoint to cinema as sight and as light.

Peasantry apart, the film is primarily a chronicle of childhood, akin to Renoir's *The River*, albeit shallower. Many images are

touchingly pretty, notably a parkscape seen through a veil of water drops, like a Seurat. But many ideas are *belle époque* stock (ladies' sumptuous hats, balloons, bright trams), and it's Pagnol's own prose, in the adult Marcel's voice-over, which touches the deeper nerves. "The r's rolled off his tongue like a river along its bed" has an intensity of description which no actor can suggest without overplaying, yet the metaphor conveys no exaggeration. It's words, too, which establish the poignant 'family romance': "My father was 25 years older than I, and that never changed; my mother and I were the same age, for my mother was me, and I thought as a child that we were born together".

The film's double viewpoint – a 'child's-eye-view' recollected in nostalgia – justifies *both* the adults never ageing *and* the images' adult understanding of parental vulnerability. But it also lures Yves Robert into allowing all the grown-ups to beam continuously with vulnerable indulgence. Similarly with the light, bright, images, the bland music, and helicopter shots whose easy sweep softens such

arduous terrain. All this idyllism does at least underline a contrast, between this culture's harsh texts – children chanting "Work hard and painstakingly, nothing else matters" – and its effective freedoms, both rural and emotional; it might even alleviate certain cine-feminist misconceptions of 'patriarchy'.

Intermittently, the film sketches an inner, tenser drama: Marcel's progress from being, as an infant, a centre of the world, who assumes that any sentence on his father's blackboard refers to himself, through all the growing pains of individuation, until he's grateful for his mother's understanding silence as they work together, folding the family linen. Students of point-of-view will relish the oddly sutured opening, with Marcel narrating a birth which turns out to be his own, his mother-to-be looking straight into camera, and talking to the father, who's abruptly in a classroom. But throughout the film, the weave of inner drama, family album, and discursive sceneries is gentle and lightly enchanting.

Raymond Durnat

Guilty by Suspicion

Never again...
Robert De Niro



Certificate
15
Distributor
Warner Brothers
Production Company
Warner Brothers
Executive Producer
Steven Reuther
Producer
Arnon Milchan
Co-Producer
Alan C. Blomquist
Associate Producer
Nelson McCormick
Unit Production Manager
Michael Polaire
Location Manager
Craig Pointes
Casting
Marion Dougherty
Additional Casting:
Betsey Cohen
Extras:
Robert John
Teitelbaum
Assistant Directors
Rob Cowan
Jeanne Caliendo
Sebastian Ballhaus
Screenplay
Irwin Winkler
Director of Photography
Michael Ballhaus
Colour
Deluxe
Prints by Technicolor
Camera Operator
David M. Dunlap
Camera Assistants
Florian Ballhaus
Mikael Glattes
Editor
Priscilla Nedd
Assistant Editors
Gregg London
Wendi Jill Raderman
Production Designer
Leslie Dille
Art Director
Leslie McDonald
Assistant Art Director
Ed Rubin
Set Decorator
Nancy Haigh
Set Dressers
Paige Augustine
Claire Gaul
Chris "Spell"
Spellman
Linda A. Cathey
Alice Baker
Scenic Artist
Michael Thompson
Daigle
Special Effects
Creative Effects
Music
James Newton
Howard
Orchestrations
Brad Dechter
Music Supervisor
Barry Levine
Music Editor
Tom Kramer
Songs
"Straighten Up and Fly Right" by Nat King Cole, Irving Mills, performed by Nat King Cole; "Bye Bye Baby", "Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend" by Jule Styne, Leo Robin, performed by Marilyn Monroe; "They Can't Take That Away From Me" by George and Ira Gershwin, performed by Billie Holiday; "I'm Just A Lucky So And So" by Duke Ellington, Mack David, performed by Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington; "It Never Entered My Mind" by Richard Rogers, Lorenz Hart, performed by George Shearing; "Jeepers Creepers" by Johnny Mercer, Harry Warren, performed by Louis

Armstrong; "Easy Come, Easy Go" by John Green, Edward Heyman, performed by Dianne Reeves; "When the Saints Go Marching In" Parody song lyrics by Larry Schanker, Brad Hall, Paul Barrosse
Costume Design
Richard Bruno
Wardrobe
Men:
Hugo Boss
Costumers
Women:
Lisa Cavacas
Men:
Laurie Riley
Make-up
Key:
Julie Hewitt
Robert De Niro:
Ilona Herman
Title Design
Dan Perri
Supervising Sound Editors
Michael Hilkene
Christopher T. Welsh
Sound Editors
Richard Burton
Gary Krivacek
Victor R. Lackey
Ian MacGregor Scott
Steve Mann
John O. Wilde
Jeremy Gordon
Robert Fitzgerald
Supervising ADR Editor
Joe Mayer
ADR Editor
Deven Curry
Sound Recordist
Richard Lightstone
Dolby stereo
Sound
Re-Recordists
Donald O. Mitchell
Rick Kline
Robert Beemer
Foley Artists
Audrey Trent
Jerry Trent
Production Aides
Katie James
P. J. Pettiet
David Smith
Dianne Rini
Mike Zieper
Jennifer Bell
Research
David Sherry
Stunt Co-ordinator
Ed Ulrich
Film Extracts
"Gentleman Prefer Blondes" (1953) courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox Corporation
"The Boy With Green Hair" (1948) provided by Turner Entertainment Company

Cast
Robert De Niro
David Merrill
Annette Bening
Ruth Merrill
George Wendt
Bunny Baxter
Patricia Wettig
Dorothy Nolan
Sam Wanamaker
Felix Graff
Luke Edwards
Paulie Merrill
Chris Cooper
Larry Nolan
Ben Piazza
Darryl F. Zanuck
Martin Scorsese
Joe Lesser
Barry Primus
Bert Alan
Gallard Sartain
Chairman Wood
Robin Gammell
Congressman
Tavener
Brad Sullivan
Congressman Velde
Tom Sizemore
Ray Karlin
Roxann Biggs
Felicia Barron
Stuart Margolin
Abe Barron
Barry Tubb
Jerry Cooper
Gene Kirkwood
Gene Woods
Margo Winkler
Leta Rosen
Allan Rich
Leonard Marks
Illeana Douglas
Nan
Al Ruscio
Ben Saltman
Bill Bailey
Fox Guard
Adam Baldwin
FBI Man
Nicholas Cille
Matt Nolan
Claude Raviere
Claude Rowan
Stephen Root
RKO Guard
John Horn
Mike Rainey
Jon Tenney
Man Shopper
Cecile Callan
Wife Shopper
Tom Rosqui
Norman
Monica Carrio
Nelly Lesser
Jonathan Ames
Cabbie
Brant Van Hoffman
Stanley
F. J. O'Neill
Ad Agency Exec
Joan Scott
Teacher
Dianne E. Reeves
Singer
Paul Collins
Bernard
James Mathers
Director
Kevin Page
FBI Man
Joe Bennett
Choreographer
Robert Chimento
A.D.
Craig Smith
D.P.
Maurice Marciano
Costume Designer
Martin Arsenault
Waiter
Ben Dinsdale
Maurice
Russell Bobbitt
Prop Master
Cindy Carey
Party Guest
Ivor Leslie Dille
1st A.D.
Natalie Zimmerman
Woman on Buckboard

9,450 feet
105 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Irwin Winkler

1951. David Merrill, a successful Hollywood director, returns to Los Angeles after scouting locations for a picture he plans to do for 20th Century-Fox. He is met by his best friend, screenwriter Bunny Baxter, whose duty is to transport him to a surprise party at his home. The cheerful atmosphere is ruined by the presence of Dorothy and Larry Nolan, an actress and writer fighting over Larry's testimony to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).

The next day, David meets with Darryl F. Zanuck, who suggests that David see Felix Graff, an attorney who helps show-business types clear themselves with HUAC - by naming names. David refuses to co-operate - especially when Bunny's name turns up on the committee list - and subsequently finds that Zanuck has passed on his film, that his agent wants him to return the advance, and that he cannot find work anywhere.

Later David and his ex-wife, Ruth, are called to the Fox lot to talk to Dorothy, who is having a breakdown because her husband has accused her of being a Communist and an unfit mother and taken their child away. David confronts Larry and is thrown off the lot. He goes to RKO to meet director Joe Lesser, who is fleeing the country rather than face HUAC - "I'm a Communist. I was a Communist twenty years ago, and I'm a Communist now" - and informs his producer that David will finish cutting his picture. Even this job falls through, as David is barred from the RKO lot and forced to sell his house.

He goes to New York, but is unable to find work. Hounded by the FBI, he returns home and moves in with Ruth and his son, Paulie. He goes to dinner with Ruth and Dorothy, who becomes hysterical and commits suicide by driving her car backwards over a cliff. He is briefly hired to direct a B-Western and fired for his supposed Communist affiliations. At home, desperate for work, he is visited by Bunny, who begs him for permission to 'name' him to the committee. "What's the difference?" Bunny asks. "You're dead already".

Zanuck offers him a new film - if he will clear himself with HUAC. On the stand at the hearing, he cannot denounce his friends and instead denounces the committee. As he leaves the room, he hears Bunny refusing to answer the committee's questions on the grounds that he may incriminate himself.

Producer Irwin Winkler (*The Right Stuff*, *Raging Bull*, various Rocky films) makes his directorial

début with *Guilty by Suspicion*, a drama about the Hollywood blacklist. Not surprisingly, the film's virtues are a producer's virtues: it has excellent period recreation (superb craft contributions on every level, with special praise for Michael Ballhaus' cinematography), the best actors money can buy, and efficiently straightforward narrative presentation. And like a true award-winning film, it proves its courage by denouncing a social injustice that is now safely in the past, and suggests that such things no longer happen.

The strangest aspect of the handful of Hollywood films that deal with the anti-Communist blacklisting of the 50s is that none of them are actually about Communists whose careers were ruined - *The Front* deals with a New York nebbish who sells the work of blacklisted writers, the brief brush with the blacklist in *The Way We Were* does not deal with the central characters, and in *Guilty by Suspicion*, the blacklisted central character, director David Merrill (Robert De Niro) is an innocent victim, caught up in the machinations of the House Un-American Activities Committee because he had attended a couple of Party meetings in the late 1930s.

This is like the old anti-lynching movies, where the message seemed to be that lynching was evil because the victims might be innocent, not that lynching was evil because it deprived the victim of due process. The structure of *Guilty by Suspicion* is a Hollywood standby, depicting the plight of an innocent man unwittingly caught up in circumstances beyond his control. Some North American critics have called it Kafka-esque and morally ambiguous, but it could only be described as Kafkaesque if Joseph K knew why he was on trial, and ambiguity of any kind seems to be beyond Winkler. It offers no dramatic surprises, because any deviation from Merrill's truth and decency would betray the film's impeccable liberal credentials. To dress the essentially 50s nature of the production in today's clothes, the political activity that draws Merrill to the committee's attention isn't anything so unfashionable as helping labour organisers or giving money to loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, but anti-nuclear activism.

Guilty by Suspicion is strong on evoking the paranoid mood of the period and is well served by its actors, particularly George Wendt as Bunny and Sam Wanamaker, himself a blacklist victim, as Felix Graff. But once again a producer has confused earnestness with seriousness, and felt that displaying good intentions could serve as a substitute for the low cunning of entertainment.

John Harkness

Highlander II - The Quickening

Certificate
15
Distributor
Entertainment
Production Company
Davis-Panzer
In association with
Lamb Bear
Entertainment
Executive Producers
Guy Collins
Mario Sotola
Producers
Peter S. Davis
William Panzer
Co-producers
Alejandro Sessa
Robin Clark
Line Producers
Jack Cummins
Chris Chrisafis
Additional
Photography:
Donald P. Borchers
Associate Producers
Stephen Kaye
Mari Provenzano
Production Associate
Gerry Laffy
Production Supervisor
Sabina Sigler
Production Co-ordinators
Mandy Marsh
Argentina:
Rosita Sanchez
Additional
Photography:
Kimberle M. Salter
Production Managers
Aron Warner
Joe Camp III
2nd Unit:
Kevin Halloran
Carlos Latreya
Additional
Photography:
Alicia Alexander
Location Managers
Martin Larumbe
Alberto Hasse
Argentina:
Fernando Nigri
Alejandro Nigri
Additional
Photography:
Dominick Clark
Post-production Supervisor
David Pauker
2nd Unit Director
Arthur Wooster
Casting
Fern Champion
Pamela Basker
Sue Swan
Buenos Aires:
Maria Ines Teyssie
Voice: The Loops
Sandy Holt
Mimi Maynard
Assistant Directors
Stephen Buck
Jack Cummins
Randall Newsome
Carlos Gil
Ariel Piluso
Javier Olivera
Jeff January
Argentina:
Claudio Reitter
2nd Unit:
Mike Topoozian
Fernando Bassi
Jonathan Slatore
Harry Jarvis
Screenplay
Peter Bellwood
Story
Brian Clemens
William Panzer
Based on characters
created by Gregory
Widen
Director of Photography
Phil Meheux
Colour
Eastman Color
Additional Photography
Jamie Thompson
2nd Unit Photography
Arthur Wooster
Visual Effects Photography

Sam Nicholson
Camera Operators
Peter Turner
2nd Unit:
Michael Frift
Additional
Photography:
Harry Garvin
Visual Effects:
Brian Villegas
Opticals:
Wally Schaab
Ron Peterson
Jeff Nicholson
Pete Yanovitch
Alan Markowitz
Matte: Mark Hardin
Steadicam Operators
Ian Jones
Rick Raphael
Video
Supervisor:
Julio Cesar Serna
Production:
Silvina Duplas
Designer/Programmer:
Gabriel Foux
Leandro Estebecorena
Computer Graphics
Supervisor:
Mario Gherzi
Visual Effects
Stargate Films
Designer:
Sam Nicholson
Producers:
Jerry Vaughn
Associate Producer:
Dan Schmit
Production
Co-ordinator:
Laura Vinyard
Laser:
Todd Mahon (Operator)
Joe Sengir
(Programmer)
Editor:
Karl Garabedian
Technical Adviser:
Leon Bijou
Optical Supervisor
Phil Meador
Rotoscope
Supervisor:
Marsha Gray
Carrington Artists:
Nina R. Salerno
Candace Lewis
Rebecca Cambruzzi
Cheryl McQuady
Matte Paintings
Jessie Silver
Ken Allen
Mark Whitlock
Animation
Supervisor:
Chris Cassidy
Effects: Jeff Burks
Allen Gonzales
Jeff Howard
Image Animation
President:
Simon Sayce
Art Director:
Cathlyn Marshall
Make-up Effects:
Geoff Portass
(Designer)
Mark Coulier
(Supervisor)
Make-up Artist:
Carrie Garton
Mould Designer:
John Schoonraad
Foam Designer:
Sue Higgins
Motion Control
Casey Wilson
Editors
Hubert C. de la
Bouillierie
Anthony Redman
Associate Editor
Silvia Ripoll
Production Designer
Roger Hall
Supervising Art Director
John King
Art Directors
Cliff Robinson
John Frankish
2nd Unit: Leon Dourge
Set Dresser
Karen Brookes
Set Co-ordinator
Sergio Sessa
Draughtsmen

Chief: Michael Boone
Senior:
Fernando Pacheco
Scenic Artist
Juan Dana
Storyboard Artists
London:
Brendan McCarthy
Argentina:
Daniel Baldos
Alberto Pez
Sculptures
Andrew Holder
Opera Sequence Designer
Roberto Oswald
Special Effects
Designer:
John Richardson
Floor Supervisors:
Chris Corbould
Kevin Draycott
Senior SFX
Technicians:
Steve Lloyd (Special)
Andy Williams
Nick Finlayson
Daniel Dark
Paul Whybrow
Workshop Supervisor:
Neil Corbould
SFX Wire Specialist:
Bob Harmon
Argentina SFX Crew
Supervisor:
Tom Cundom
Technical Consultant:
Simon Atherton
EFX Unit Co-ordinator:
Louise Rosner
Miniature Pyrotechnics
Joe Viskocil
John Hartigan
Models
Warren Dragon Dronet
Erik Van Kirk
Mike MacFarlane
Roger L. McCain
Karen Mutter
Nick Villar
Miniatures
Supervisor:
Ron Thornton
Foremen:
Mark Ellis
Thomas Gleason
Music
Stewart Copeland
Music Director
Jonathan Sheffer
Music Extracts
Gottedammerung by
Richard Wagner,
performed by Birgit
Nilsson with the
Vienna Philharmonic
Orchestra, conducted
by Georg Solti
Music Performed by
Seattle Symphony
Symphony Chorale
Director:
Gerard Schwarz
Orchestrations
Jonathan Sheffer
Executive Music Producer
Derek Power
Supervising Music Producer
Pete Winkelman
Music Co-producer
Jeff Seitz
Music Supervisor
Seth Kaplan
Music Editor
Michael Dittrick
Songs
"Highlander Training
Theme" by Michael
Kamen; "Who's That
Man" by Sean Harris,
performed by
Magnetic; "It's a
Perfect, Perfect World"
by Norman Gimbel,
Donald Markowitz,
performed by Cash
Hollywood featuring
Ellis Hall; "As Time
Goes By" by Herman
Hupfeld, performed by
Brenda Russell; "Here
We Go" by Robin
George, Sean Harris,
performed by
Notorious; "Haunted"

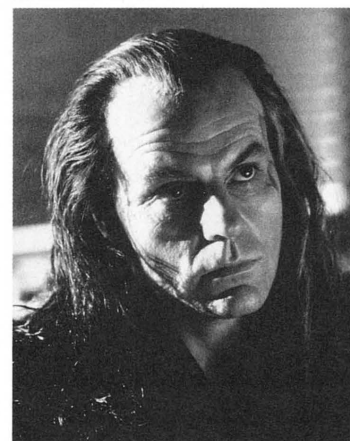
by Robin George, Peter
Green, Glenn Hughes,
performed by Glenn
Hughes; "Heaven" by
Deborah Holland,
Stewart Copeland;
"One Dream" by Lou
Gramm, Bruce Turgon,
performed by Lou
Gramm; "Judgement"
by Stewart Copeland,
William Panzer; "Shoot
'em Down" by Gerry
Laffy, Tony Forsythe,
performed by Lou
Gramm; "Trust" by and
performed by Heeren
Stephens; "One Breath
Away" by and
performed by Meredith
Brooks, Greg de Belles
Costume Design
Deborah Everton
Opera: Anibal Lapiz
Assassins: Bob
Ringwood
Wardrobe Supervisors
Nanrose Buchman
Set: Marissa Urruti
2nd Unit: Ana Tasaki
Costumers
Men: Marcelo Mateo
Women: Javier Almiron
Make-up Artists
Maria Laura Lopez
Chief: Paul Engelen
2nd Unit: Marta
Lipezker
Special Make-up Artist
Greg Cannom
Title Design
Consolidated Film
Industries
Supervising Sound Editors
Michael Redbourne
Richard Shorr
Sound Editor
Ed White
ADR Editor
Martha J. Burns
Foley Editor
Tora Szabo
Sound Recordists
Jeannette Browning
Richard Gooch
Music: Joel Moss
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Wayne Heitman
Mike Hoogenboom
Mark Smith
Consultant:
John A. Amicarella
Sound Effects Editors
Richard P. Dwan
G.W. Davis
Joseph H. Holsen
Victor Iorillo
Sound Effects
Richard Shorr
Richard P. Dawn
Foley Artists
John Post
Bess Hopper
Technical Consultants
Camera:
Leonard Rodriguez
Solis
2nd Unit:
Ever Alfredo Latour
Stunt Co-ordinators
Frank Orsatti
Additional Unit:
Kurt Bryant
Stunts
Sandy Beruman
Tom Dewter
Andy Gill
Jeff Imada
Eddie Matthews
Carl Milnac
Arturo Noal
Jerry Spicer
Mike Stone
Steve Walter
Danny Weselis
Frank Orsatti
Kurt Bryant
Stunt Doubles
Christopher Lambert:
Tom Huff
Sean Connery:
Rocky Taylor

Michael Ironside:
Matt Johnston
Virginia Madsen:
Christy Randall
Roxana Polouzzi
Sword Master
Frank Orsatti
Cast
Christopher Lambert
Connor MacLeod
Sean Connery
Juan Villalobos
Ramirez
Virginia Madsen
Louise Marcus
Michael Ironside
General Katana
Allan Rich
Alan Neyman
John C. McGinley
Blake
Phil Brock
Cabbie
Rusty Schwimmer
Drunk
Ed Trucco
Jimmy
Stephen Grives
Hamlet
Jimmy Murray
Horatio
Pete Antico
Corda
Peter Bucossi
Reno
Peter Bromilow
Joe
Jeff Altman
Doctor
Diana Rossi
Virginia
Randall Newsome
Max Guard
Karin Drexler
Brenda
Max Berliner
Charlie
Eduardo Sapac
Holt
Michel Peyronel
Sabastian Morgan
Kids
Bruno Curichelli
Zeist Chief Justice
Daniel Trovo
2nd Justice
Diego Leske
3rd Justice
Matt Johnson
Terrorist
Julio Breshnev
Voices
Jonathon Slatore
Supervisor
Ted McNabney
Patricia De Biaggi
Andre Geré
TV Newspeople
Jorge Ochoa
Stage Manager
Jorge Varas
Latin Supervisor
Alan McCormick
Teenager
Miguel Fernandez
Alonso
Roy
Roderick Cameron
Security Technician
Nora Zinsky
Cabin Attendant
Ezequiel Eskenazi
Storey
Max Leader
Jacques Arndt
Nicolas Deane
Scientists
Helen Buck
Asian Technician
Andres Geringer
Russian Technician
Matt Johnston
Cobalt Man
Hector Malamud
Psychic Chef
Pedro Loeb
General Katana's Aide
Americo Gallo
Grave Digger
Dana Swain
Safety Spokesperson
Nicolas Frey
Eduardo Nutkiewicz
Yuppies
8,982 feet
100 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Russell Mulcahy

1999: With the ozone layer in tatters, Connor MacLeod, the Highlander, builds a giant shield to span the globe, saving all humanity. 2034: The shield is now run by a powerful multi-national corporation; under it, the world is twilit, dank and depressed. MacLeod, now an old and weary man, is settling back to enjoy some opera when he flashes back to the Planet Zeist, earth-centuries before. As a young man, he was chosen by the heroic elder Ramirez to lead his people's revolt against the dictator Katana, and bonded to his mentor by the Quickening, a sort of electrical life force.



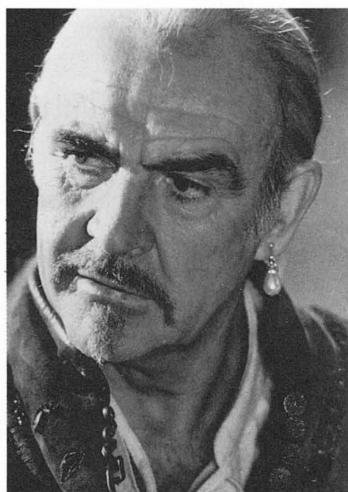
Zeist's Dictator: Michael Ironside

When the revolt failed, MacLeod and Ramirez were banished to Earth, condemned to live forever, immortal and unaging, until one of them ends up as the only Zeistian on the planet; the catch is that a Zeistian can only be killed by being beheaded. As MacLeod drifts back to the present, he is cornered by Louise Marcus, a beautiful young ecological terrorist. Marcus' group has broken into the Shield Corporation, discovering its terrible secret: the ozone layer has corrected itself, and the shield is being maintained only for the corporation's profit.

After despatching two of Katana's wingborne assassins MacLeod suddenly finds himself thirty years old again, and summons his Quickening to call his old friend Ramirez.

Ramirez, MacLeod and Louise together set out to rescue Alan Neyman, MacLeod's fellow idealistic shield-builder, who has been imprisoned by the corporation in Max, a subterranean high-security prison. When the threesome find themselves in a deadly trap sprung by Blake, the corporation's chairman, Ramirez calls on his Quickening, sacrificing himself to save his friends. Once escaped from Max, MacLeod and Louise rush to destroy the shield. After a short, spectacular battle, MacLeod beheads Katana and destroys the shield.

Where 1985's *Highlander* was merely foolish, its sequel is a terrible mess. The film's organisation at all levels, from plot down to the cutting of individual action sequences, is so full of holes that there is nothing solid for it to adhere to. The fundamental premise, that MacLeod of Clan MacLeod was immortal, then mortal, and now is made immortal again, is as convoluted on screen as it looks on paper. Without a solid grasp of the *Highlander*'s fascinating life story, there is little chance of following the reasoning behind his antics. But this life story is sketched in so perfunctorily as to be incomprehensible, and no adequate explanation is given as to why



Made to measure: Sean Connery

Ramirez, once dead, suddenly comes to life again, and equally, how his exertions in *Max* come to kill him, given that his head is still intact. Maybe this is part of the point, leaving him free to come to life all over again in time for one more reimmortalising.

The film, shot entirely on location in Argentina, seems to have had a sorry production history, hinted at in the press notes which mention that the original design for *Earth* under the shield was to involve covering everything with a dank green moss. Such a plan might have given the film's setting the novelty it so desperately needs, but it was abandoned as too expensive, to be replaced by a kind of rent-a-

barbarism of *Total Recall*-type corporate monumentality and post-*Batman* urban squalor.

Christopher Lambert, alas, is no Arnold Schwarzenegger, without enough personality even to be able to parody himself, and backed by equally dull performances from Virginia Madsen as eco-bimbo Louise and Michael Ironside, a talented character actor forced into a Jack Nicholson groove, as the dictator Katana. The film's one saving grace is, as ever, Sean Connery, who turns in a wry performance as the somehow Scottish Ramirez in made-to-measure plus-fours and elegantly incongruous Morningside accent.

Jenny Turner



World without reason (Christopher Lambert)

Kickboxer 2 – The Road Home

Certificate
18
Distributor
Entertainment
Production Company
Kings Road
Entertainment
Producer
Tom Karnowski
Associate Producer
David S. Goyer
Production
Co-ordinator
Jennifer Marchese
Unit Production Manager
Rick Blumenthal
Location Manager
Edward T. Parmalee
Casting
Cathy Henderson
Extras:
Superior Casting
Events:
Edward T. Parmalee
Assistant Directors
Robert Williams
Mitchell Factor
Screenplay
David S. Goyer
Director of Photography
George Mooradian
In colour
Camera/Steadicam Operator
Mark Emery Moore
Editor
Alan E. Baumgarten
Production Designer
Nicholas T. Prevoulos
Set Decorator
Beau Peterson
Set Dresser
Michael Allowitz
Scenic Artist
Craig Muzio
Special Effects Supervisors
Cliff Lane
David Rau
Special Effects
Richard Szulborski

Music
Tony Riparetti
James Saad
Music Editor
Robert Randles
Songs
"My Brother's Eyes" by Malcolm Seagrave, Eric Barnett, Vance Williams, performed by Eric Barnett; "A Man Alone" by Kim Simmonds, performed by Savoy Brown; "It's All Up to You" by Tony Riparetti, James Saad, performed by Daniel
Costume Design:
Joseph A. Porro
Supervisor:
Leslie Nicholson
Key Costumer
Lizz Wolfe
Costumers
Theda DeRamus
Taffye Wallace
Key Make-up Artist
Teri Blythe
Make-up Artist
Nancy Hvasta
Special Make-up Effects
Dan Platt
John Logan
Kieth Edmier
Mitch Devane
Larry Odien
Mike Smithson
Titles/Opticals
Mercer Titles and Optical Effects
Supervising Sound Editor
James Gavin Bedford
Sound Editors
Joseph H. Earle Jr
Lee Harry
Dialogue:
Christopher B. Reeves
ADR Editor
E.J. Lachmann
Sound Recordist
Beau Franklin
Sound Re-recordists
Wayne Heitman
Stan Kastner
Gregory Steele
Foley Artists
Page Pollock
Robert Ahrens
Technical Adviser
Don Familton
Background Action Co-ordinator
Maurice Travis
Production Assistants
Robert Gottlieb
Catherine Anderson
Peter Etnoyer
Ramsay Jerome
Stunts
Ray Pichette
Dale Jacoby
Benny Urquidez
Manny Perry
Steven Ito
Fight Choreographers
Jim Nickerson
Benny "The Jet" Urquidez

Cast
Sasha Mitchell
David Sloan
Peter Boyle
Justin Maciah
Dennis Chan
Xian Chow
Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa
Mr Sangha
John Diehl
Morrison
Michel Qissi
Tong Po
Heather McComb
Lisa
Vince Murdocco
Brian Wagner
Humberto Ortiz
Joey
Emmanuel Kervyn
Kurt Sloan
Matthias Hues
Vargas
Joe Restivo
Ring Announcer
Vincent Klyn
Thai Thug
Brian Green
Tommy
Brent Kelly
Carl
Annie O'Donnell
Brian's Mother
Christian Andrews
Brian's Trainer
Jay Byron
State Official
Gene LeBell
Referee
Dale Jacoby
Judge
Robert Gottlieb
Lou Lescano
Tony Fasce
Lou Lescano's Manager
Alfred Urquidez
Abraham Hernandez
Jnr
Don Familton
David's Cornermen
Jeff Mulvin
Mark Roemer
Brian's Cornermen
Amy Arthur
Kristen
Dorothy Dells
Checkout Nurse
Corinne Oliva
Nurse
Lisa Capperino
Woman in Window
Casey Stengel
Eric Sloan
Debrae Barenfeld
Maciah's Girlfriend
Thunderwolf
Ed Anders
Brian's Opponents
Chance Michael Corbitt
Kid in Gym

8,112 feet
90 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Albert Pyun

David Sloan, younger brother of Kurt and Eric (see *Kickboxer*, MFB, September 1989), teaches martial-arts skills to youngsters at his Los Angeles gym. He is approached by promoter Justin Maciah, who wants him to front his new United Kickboxing Association, and participate in big-money championship bouts. Wary of the flashy Maciah, David tells him that he has not fought professionally since the death of his two brothers in Thailand. David's most gifted pupil, the hot-headed Brian Wagner, leaves him for Maciah's intensive, high-tech training facilities. But faced with a financial crisis at the gym, David is forced to reconsider, and takes on and defeats Maciah's strongest fighter, Vargas.

No sooner is he crowned UKA champion than he retires, denouncing the association as crooked and drug-related. Maciah orders Vargas to burn down the Sloan gym in retaliation; a street urchin David has allowed to sleep in the basement is killed, and David himself is shot when he tries to intervene. In hospital, he is visited by Xian, the master who trained Kurt Sloan for his triumphant bout against Thai champion Tong Po. It transpires that the latter then assassinated Kurt, Eric and Xian's niece Mylee; in so doing, he left Thai kickboxing without a champion, and undid his own hopes of regaining his honour.

While Xian sets about restoring David's fitness and self-respect, Sangha, the shady Thai businessman who is backing UKA, sets up a bout for Brian (to which David is invited). At the last minute, Sangha illegally substitutes Tong Po for Maciah's man, and David and Xian watch helplessly as Brian is defeated and finally killed

in the ring. David and Tong Po arrange their own bout – David to avenge his brothers and Brian; Tong Po to restore his honour and regain the Thai crown – which was Sangha's plan all along. They fight in the traditional Thai manner, without rules and with broken glass on their taped hands. Although physically the weaker of the two, David defeats Tong Po with speed and concentration. Sangha pulls a gun but is overpowered; David and Xian resolve to reopen the Sloan gym.

For forty minutes or so, this inevitable sequel gets by quite well with only the barest references to its predecessor. Deprived of Jean-Claude Van Damme, the film-makers have blithely created a third brother, David, minding the family gym in LA and mourning the loss of his two brothers. David has no thought of revenge for – and precious little curiosity about – his brothers' sudden but vague demise in Thailand a year earlier. Instead he has given up professional fighting to devote himself to the street kids who flock to his gym. Surprisingly effective and low-key, the first half of the film has little dramatic action, but a naturalistic downtown ambience – peeling paint and filtered sunlight – not unlike *Fat City*.

Regrettably, at about the mid-way point, the picture changes course and contrives the true sequel that has been deferred so far. The sneaky Orientals manoeuvre the requisite showdown between Sloan and the genuinely impressive Tong Po, who has, it seems, murdered the other Sloans in between *Kickboxer* and this film. This convoluted conspiracy dissipates all the credibility Albert Pyun has built up in the early stages, leaving him with just another crude, meretricious project to his name.

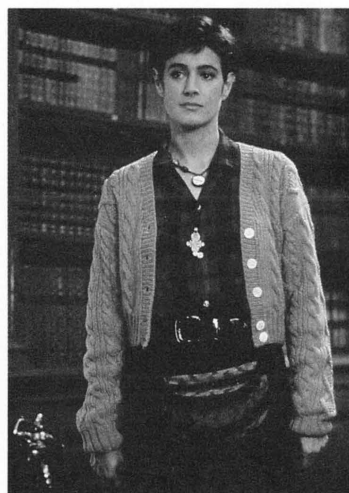
Tom Charity



Fat city: Vince Murdocco

A Kiss Before Dying

Certificate
18
Distributor
UIP
Production Companies
Universal
An Initial Film production
Executive Producer
Eric Fellner
Producer
Robert Lawrence
Associate Producers
Chris Thompson
UK:
Paul Raphael
Production Associate
USA:
Chris Brigham
Production Co-ordinators
Tania Windsor
New York:
Ellen Hillers
Virginia:
Rosemary Lombard
Production Manager
Mary Richards
Location Managers
Guy Tannahill
New York:
Joe Iberti
Casting
Billy Hopkins
UK:
Davis & Zimmerman
New York:
Suzanne Smith
Extras:
Joy Todd Casting
Assistant Directors
Patrick Clayton
Tim Lewis
Julia Waye
UK:
Mary Soan
Davina Nicholson
Lynn Hoey
New York:
Gary Marcus
Noga Isackson
Amelia Villero
Virginia:
Randy Fletcher
H. H. Cooper
Screenplay
James Dearden
Based on the novel by
Ira Levin
Director of Photography
Mike Southon
Colour
Eastman Colour
Prints by Technicolor
Camera Operator
Philip Sindall
Steadicam Operator
Virginia:
Rick Raphael
Video Effects
Chris Warren
Optical Effects
The Magic Camera Company
Matte Painting
Optical Film Effects
Editor
Michael Bradsell
Production Designer
Jim Clay
Art Directors
Rod McClean
Chris Seagers
New York:
Kalina Ivanov
Virginia:
Chris Shriver
Set Decorator
New York:
Catherine Davis
Set Dressers
Stephanie McMillan
New York:
Dan Mahon
Joe Calderaro
David Benninghoff
Virginia:
Scott Rosenstock
Scenic Artist
Steve Mitchell
Storyboard Artist
Tony Wright



Vertigo remodelled: Sean Young

Special Effects Co-ordinator
New York:
Russell Berg
Special Effects
Virginia:
John Dods
Music/Musical Director
Howard Shore
Music Performed by
The London Philharmonic
Orchestrations
Homer Denison
Music Editor
Graham Sutton
Songs
"Dangerous Love" by
Simon Stokes, Mark
Hefferman,
performed by Simon
Stokes; "Transfusion"
by Justin Langlands,
David Henley,
performed by Blood
Brothers; "Rubberman
Rock This House" by
Jon Moss, performed
by Rubberman;
"Naked in the Rain"
by Durga McBroom,
Martin Glover,
performed by Blue
Pearl; "So What" by
and performed by
Miles Davis
Costume Design
Marit Allen
Wardrobe
Supervisor:
Kenny Crouch
Mistress:
Jo Koror
UK:
Janet Tebrooke
New York:
Sussie Money
Make-up
Supervisor:
Peter Frampton
New York:
Leslie Fuller
Titles/Opticals
The Optical
Partnership
Sound Editor
Kevin Brazier
Sound Recordists
Ian Voigt
UK:
Simon Okin
Music:
Alan Snelling
Sound Re-recordists
Campbell Askew
John Hayward
Virginia:
Frank Stettner
Production Assistants
New York:
Roni Ben-Nevat
Ron Hallenbake
Phil Roc
Paul Sanchez
Dirk Standen

Stunts
Martin Grace
Helen Caldwell
Graeme Crowther
Tracey Eddon
Mike Potter
Eddie Powell
Greg Powell
Jery Hewitt
George Aguilera
Cliff Audney
Deana Evans
Hugh O'Brien

Cast
Matt Dillon
Jonathan Corliss
Sean Young
Ellen/Dorothy
Carlsson
Max Von Sydow
Thor Carlsson
Jim Fyfe
Terry Dieter
Ben Browder
Tommy Roussel
Diane Ladd
Mrs Corliss
James Bonfanti
Young Jonathan
Sarah Keller
Lecturer
Martha Gehman
Patricia Farren
Lia Chang
Shoe Saleslady
Yvette Edelhart
Screaming Lady
Lachelle Carl
Reporter
Briony Glassco
Waitress
Shane Rimmer
Commissioner Mallet
James Russo
Dan Corelli
Adam Horovitz
Jay Faraday
Freddy Koehler
Mickey
Joy Lee
Cathy
Brett Barth
Dave
Elzbieta Czyzewska
Landlady
Galaxy Craze
Susie
Rory Cochrane
Chico
Kristy Graves
Rose
Billie Neal
Nurse
P. Jay Sidney
Bellman
Sam Coppola
Detective Michaelson
Lynn Frazen-Cohen
Elderly Woman
Leslie Lyles
Mrs Roussel
Mark Potter
Mr Roussel
Nancy Herman
Receptionist

8,357 feet
93 minutes

USA 1991

Director: James Dearden

In a Pittsburgh suburb, a small boy, Jonathan Corliss, watches daily from his window as the freight trains of the Carlsson Copper Company roll past. Property of industrialist Thor Carlsson, they become for Jonathan the symbol of his own determination to succeed. A decade later, after secretly winning the heart of Carlsson's daughter Dorothy during their student days in Philadelphia, Jonathan finds his master-plan at risk when Dorothy becomes pregnant. Promising matrimony, he takes her to the Marriage Licence Bureau when he knows the office is shut, tempts her up to the roof, and pushes her off. Disgusted to learn that Dorothy was pregnant, Carlsson accepts her death as suicide, but his other daughter, Ellen, a New York social worker, decides that the real blame must lie with the man Dorothy was planning to marry.

Coming to Philadelphia, Ellen confronts her sister's former boyfriend, Tommy Roussel. He has a good alibi, but mentions that Dorothy had another admirer nobody knew much about, a student whose picture would be in the campus yearbook. While Ellen waits, Roussel hurries to his room and has just identified the picture when Jonathan himself violently intervenes; later, Ellen and the landlady break in to find that Roussel has apparently hanged himself, leaving behind an admission of guilt. Satisfied that she has proved Dorothy was murdered by Roussel, Ellen returns to New York and to a burgeoning romance with Jonathan, who has established a new identity for himself.

Ellen is on poor terms with her father, but Jonathan gets on well with the industrialist. After disposing of a former friend of Dorothy's, Patricia, who has a photograph of Dorothy and her mystery man, Jonathan marries Ellen. Soon disenchanted with her husband's obsession with his work as her father's personal assistant, Ellen is shaken by the news of Patricia's death, and employs a private detective, Corelli, to investigate further. Another former student, Terry Dieter, who recognises



Double perfect: Sean Young, Matt Dillon

Jonathan from his Philadelphia days, leads Ellen to check the campus yearbook and then to track down Jonathan's mother in Pittsburgh. Breaking into Jonathan's room, she finds Dorothy's hidden cigarette lighter. Close on her heels, Jonathan admits to everything, and pursues Ellen across the railway tracks where a Carlsson Copper Company freight train mows him down.

With enviable intricacy, Ira Levin's debut novel has the formal structure of a Woolrich thriller; a triptych, it devotes each of its sections to a different sister from the same wealthy family, each girl a prospective victim to the same malevolent charmer who, for the first third of the story, contrives to be unnamed. In translating Levin's various subterfuges to the screen, James Dearden has economised both in cost and in dramatic overheating by reducing the sisters to two, and has been forced – film being what it is – to reveal the killer as being Matt Dillon right from the start.

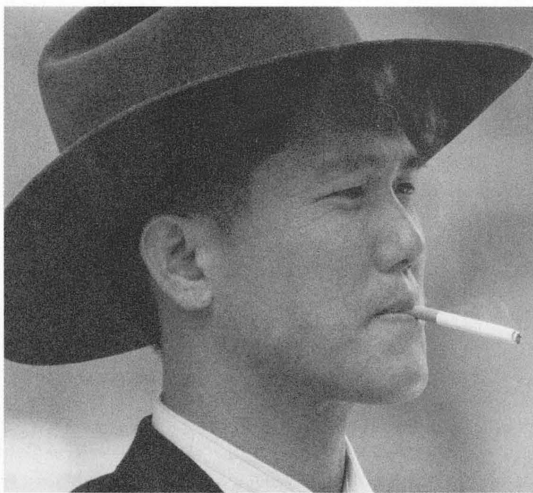
Turning this to advantage, his adaptation clears the decks for what becomes an exploration not of social conspiracy (which emerged as Levin's usual concern) but of volatile individual duplicity. Where Levin's serial-killer targets the three sisters in a wilful, almost consciously self-destructing pattern, Dearden's cold-blooded opportunist simply transfers his intended route to success from one girl to the other. Dearden also cheats on the story by, for example, concealing from us the fact that Ellen and Jonathan have already met until after the killer has turned up on her doorstep. It is only by the most outrageous coincidence that Jonathan intercepts Patricia's phone call; and the enlistment of the detective, Corelli, is an irrelevant detour, given that Ellen attends to most of the research on her own.

Liberal alluding to Hitchcock by killing off his leading actress in the first reel, Dearden includes subtler references like the washing out of hair-dye and the cop who just won't leave. There are some striking effects (Dorothy's death plunge is later evoked by a tumbling cup of coffee), not least of which is the miraculous construction of an authentic America almost entirely within Shepperton Studios.

The simple shot of grisly evidence being discovered on a misty seashore, or of Ellen and Jonathan side by side at the cinema with their minds furiously on other matters, illustrate an appealing command of ironic understatement. But *A Kiss Before Dying* never transcends the sense of erratic contrivance to achieve a respectable equivalent to Levin's darkly declamatory original.

Philip Strick

Life Is Cheap... But Toilet Paper Is Expensive



Stranger's return... Spencer Nakasako

Certificate
(Not yet issued)
Distributor
ICA Projects
Production Companies
Forever Profit
Investments Ltd
A Far East Stars
production
Executive Producer
John Koon-chung
Chan
Wayne Wang
Producer
Winnie Fredriksz
Production Co-ordinator
Tsang Lai Ping
Production Manager
Jessinta Liu
Unit Manager
Wong Lok Yin
Co-Director
Spencer Nakasako
Assistant Director
Johnny Lee
Screenplay
Spencer Nakasako
Story
Amir M. Mokri
Spencer Nakasako
Wayne Wang
Chinese Dialogue
John Koon-chung
Chan
Director of Photography
Amir M. Mokri
In colour
Editors
Chris Sanderson
Sandy Nervig
Rupert Miles
Ma Po Shan
Alasdair Whitelaw
Kevin A. Canamar

Editorial Consultant
Lee Percy
Art Director
Colette Koo
Prosthetic Hand
First Take
Productions, Los
Angeles
Music
Mark Adler
Songs
"Life Is Cheap" by
Mark Adler, John
Koon-chung Chan,
performed by Maria
Cordero
"It's Always Spring" by
Yao Ming, Chang Chi,
performed by Yu
Chien
"Lover's Tears" by Yao
Ming, Chen Di Yi,
performed by Gary
Kong, Rocky Ho
"I Don't Belong to
You" by Mark Adler,
performed by Rinde
Eckert
"Sweet Night" by Kim
Uk Kuk, performed by
Lee Heung Lan
"The Magnificent
Seven" by Elmer
Bernstein, performed
by Mark Adler
Additional Music and Solos
Trombone:
Ray Anderson
Bass:
Mark Dresser
Saxophone:
Ric Halstead
Guitar:
Eugene Pao
Percussion:
Johnny Abraham
Make-Up
Yeung Choi Fung
Sound Recordist
Curtis Choy
Production Assistant
Loung Chi Wai
Narrator
Dennis Dun
English Subtitles
Tony Rayns

Cast
Chan Kim Wan
The Duck Killer
Spencer Nakasako
The Man-with-No-
Name
Victor Wong
The Blind Man
Cheng Kwan Min
Uncle Cheng
Cora Miao
Money
Lam Chung
Red Guard
Allen Fong
The Taxi Driver
John K. Chan
The Son-in-Law
Bonnie Ngai
The Daughter
Lo Wai
The Boss
Cinda Hui
Kitty
Gary Kong
Rocky Ho
Punks
Yu Chien
Blue Velvet
Wu Kin Man
The Spiritualist
Lo Lieh
The Pianist
Mr and Mrs Kai-Bong Chau
Themselves

7,920 feet
88 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Wayne Wang

A young Asian-American arrives in Hong Kong from San Francisco to deliver a mysterious case to a local gang boss. He meets his contact, Uncle Cheng, who tells him to wait. The next day, the man is called to a dubbing studio where he meets the boss' lieutenant, Red Guard, who is arguing with Money, the boss' mistress. It seems that, for uncertain reasons, the boss cannot meet him. Meanwhile, the boss' daughter is being married off to a Chinese-American anthropologist.

When the man eventually meets the boss at a party given by a high-society couple to celebrate the forthcoming marriage, little interest is shown in the case. The man meanwhile is having disturbing dreams. He is warned to be careful by a blind man hawking watches. Frustrated by his lack of success and the strangeness of Hong Kong life, he breaks open the case to find only pornography and cheap souvenirs. Uncle Cheng arranges for Kitty, a prostitute, to visit the man and later the boss organises a sight-seeing tour of Hong Kong for him during which his case is stolen by a couple of louts.

Money turns up and explains that she is in love with the boss' daughter, who has attempted suicide to avoid marriage. Money helps him to replace the case, but Red Guard is secretly taking photos of them. The boss could lose face over his mistress' lesbian affair, and has set up the man as Money's lover using Red Guard's photos to compromise him. In order to save himself and Money, the man must publicly take his punishment by eating shit. Money is saved and, unharmed, the man flies back to San Francisco.

Originally intending to make a documentary about Hong Kong before its return to mainland China, Wayne Wang, now obviously a stranger in the city he left at seventeen, has constructed instead a low-budget fiction. Using a tongue-in-cheek bricolage of genres (the Western, the gangster film, the thriller, the underground movie), Wang, sometimes seriously, sometimes playfully sets about capturing the often pathetic fantasies of both East and West as they clash in the modern-day "Wild East border town" of Hong Kong.

Beginning on a light note, as the young American-Asian (he is given no name) arrives in town wearing a cowboy hat, the film descends swiftly into a world where Buñuelian nightmare (a recurring image of a violently severed hand) co-exists with the surrealism of Hong Kong life. This is portrayed largely through 'interviews' with a pimp, a

prostitute, a one-armed displaced musician, a vulgar rich couple, a crazy cab driver and others. The film's violence is to be found in what seems to be the hero's mental life and in Hong Kong's day-to-day world.

This is a film jam-packed with severings and amputations (fish heads, ducks' throats, the man's hand, the pianist's arm, and finally and wittily, the dinner knife delicately cutting into the curled shit on the hero's plate), serving perhaps as a motif for Hong Kong's political decapitation. The documentary-style interviews shot directly to camera give way at times to a camera that peeks uncertainly through half-open doors, as when Uncle Cheng burns the bloody handkerchief before the weeping Money, and when the Boss' daughter kneels imploringly before her lesbian lover.

The cool documentarist approach is also punctuated by strobe-cuts and rather enigmatic inserts that flash up like memories. In the middle section, a long, dizzying hand-held camera chase erupts only to end when the exhausted cameraman audibly sinks to the floor, coughing with the strain, a hilarious instance of the film's playing off of its documentary and fiction aspects. The courier stands in for Wang himself, both captivated and repulsed by the society he wants to identify with and understand, and which in the end makes him literally eat shit.

This fascinating, disturbing, witty and beautifully shot film bristles with energy, but perhaps ends up somehow morally and emotionally compromised behind its elaborate (and aesthetically satisfying) defence structure. The film's title is only funny because of the way it describes what is actually tragic. The film's flaw perhaps lies in Wang's inability to get behind that joke. It is as if the despair that is barely suppressed in some of the film's images can only be held in check by a humour which in the end the hero shares with the Duck Killer, who utters the comment that serves as the film's perfectly apt title.

Michael O'Pray



Clash in a border town

Reviews

A Kiss Before Dying
Life Is Cheap... But Toilet
Paper Is Expensive

Le Mari de la coiffeuse (The Hairdresser's Husband)



Erotic fantasy: Henry Hocking, Anne-Marie Pisani...

Certificate
15

Distributor
Palace Pictures

Production Companies
Lambart Productions/
TFI Films Production

In association with
Investimage 2 and 3,
Sofica Creations
With the
participation of
Centre National de la
Cinématographie

Producer
Thierry de Ganay
Line Producer
Monique Guerrier

Production Co-ordinator
Marie-Noëlle Hauville
Production Manager
Frederic Sauvagnac

Unit Manager
Daniel Baschieri

Casting
Marie Christine
Lafosse

Etienne Dhaene
Children:
Pim Pom Casting
Nathalie Luquiens

Assistant Directors
Etienne Dhaene
Marie Beauchaud

Screenplay
Claude Klotz
Patrice Leconte

Story
Patrice Leconte

Director of Photography
Eduardo Serra

Panavision
In colour

Camera Operators
Philippe Pavons de

Ceccaly
Valerie Mathieu

Editor
Joëlle Hache

Art Director
Ivan Maussion

Set Design
Philippe Lacomblez
Jacques Brizzio

Frank Miniconi
Marc Thiebault
David Morel de
Saintjean

Special Effects
Philippe Hubin

Music
Michael Nyman

Songs
"Saffak Alik" by
Khaled Zaid, El Emir,
Faical Ben Yazid;

"Ya Hourra" by Khaled
Zaid, Moubarek El
Hadibi; "Ya Rit Fiya
Khabbiha" by Ragheb
Alame, Toufik

Bourrkani; "Wadana-
Wadana" by Abdel
Rab Adris, Kim Al
Baouadi; "Sa Alouni
Annais" by The
Rahabani Brothers

Costume
Cécile Magnan
Wardrobe
Anne-Marie Drean

Make-up
Judith Gayo

Sound Editor
Jean Goudier

Sound Recordist
Pierre Lenoir

Sound Re-recordist
Dominique
Hennequin

Sounds Effects
Editor

Jérôme Lévy
Sound Effects
Alain Lévy

Cast
Jean Rochefort

Antoine
Anna Galiena

Mathilde
Roland Bertin

Antoine's Father
Maurice Chevit

Agopian
Philippe Clevenot

Morvoisieux
Jacques Mathou

Monsieur Chardon
Claude Aufaure

Gay Customer
Albert Delpy

Donecker
Henry Hocking

Antoine age 12
Ticky Holgado

Morvoisieux's Son-in-
law

Michèle Laroque

Adopted Child's
Mother

Anne-Marie Pisani

Madame Shaeffer

Pierre Meyrand

Antoine's Brother

Yveline Ailhaud

Antoine's Mother

Julien Bukowski

Gloomy Man

Youssef Hamid

Tunisian Customer

Laurence Ragon

Madame Chardon

Arlette Tephany

Antoine's Sister-in-law

Christophe Pichon

Twelve-year-old

Antoine's brother

Thomas Rochefort

Little Edouard

France 1990

Director: Patrice Leconte

● Recollections of family holidays at Luc-sur-mer remain with Antoine throughout his later years. In 1947, when he was twelve, his mother insisted on his wearing woollen bathing-trunks while he played on the beach with the other kids. His refuge was the local barber's shop where the voluminous Madame Shaeffer, barely contained by her tunic, caressed his hair and stimulated his senses. Thanks to her, his future was clear: he was going to marry a hairdresser. This caused a family tumult, but when Madame Shaeffer died from an overdose of barbiturates, Antoine recognised no other purpose in his life than to wait for her successor. It is a wait that takes him well into adulthood.

At last he discovers the lovely Mathilde who, after serving as assistant hairdresser at 'Isidore's', has taken over from the owner, Agopian, and now runs the place alone. Within half an hour of his first appointment, Antoine is seduced by her smile, her touch, and her serenity; he blurts out a marriage proposal which they both immediately ignore. After sleepless nights, he visits her again, for a shampoo; unprompted, Mathilde announces that she has considered his suggestion and has decided to accept. Agopian and Antoine's brother and sister-in-law attend the simple ceremony, which takes place in the shop.

The days that follow are ecstatic. As Mathilde attends to the customers, Antoine attends to her; often their mutual ardour can scarcely be restrained until closing time. Some of the clients become regular friends; others, like an errant husband trying to dodge his vengeful wife, are rare if memorable visitors. In ten years of harmony there is only one trivial quarrel; as reconciliation, they get drunk on cologne and after-shave. Everyone gets older, and Antoine's hair, endlessly and adoringly trimmed, is reduced to a stubble. Agopian submits to incarceration in a geriatric hospital, and they make a valedictory visit.

One afternoon they make love during a thunderstorm, and Mathilde runs away and drowns herself. She leaves a note explaining she wants their happiness to remain always perfect, undiminished by the passing years. Back in the shop, Antoine dances for an appreciative Tunisian customer (Arabic music being his other great passion from childhood); the man tries briefly to teach him the proper steps, and waits placidly for the hairdresser to return.

● As with *Monsieur Hire*, his previous tale of romantic

fixation, Patrice Leconte's *The Hairdresser's Husband* revolves with mesmerised formality around a handful of self-obsessed and self-defeating no-hopers. In the case of *Hire*, based on one of Georges Simenon's studies of guilt and complicity, no other past than that of the Simenon tradition itself seemed particularly necessary: the lonely voyeur could legitimately be set before us without family ties or conventional context. However, in the similarly isolated and contemplative character of Antoine, which the director admits to basing distantly on his own childhood aspirations, it becomes plain that Leconte regards backgrounds as unimportant in any case – or rather, that what drives people to behave as



they do is a mystery he prefers to leave intact.

Antoine's keen sexual interest, as a boy, in the stimulating body language of the affectionate hairdresser Madame Shaeffer could have something to do with his mother and with the several discomforts of the absurd bathing-trunks she makes him wear, but the mother's appearances in the film are too brief for us to be permitted to judge. More to the point, we know nothing about the private life of Madame Shaeffer (her sudden suicide prompts no appreciable remorse or curiosity), while the miraculous Mathilde awaits Antoine, after a gap of some thirty years in his autobiography, in a state of compliance that is strikingly

unblemished by prior commitment.

Such paucity of detail is no problem with the film's incidental characters who, like the ageing debonair Agopian or the corpulent poet Donecker, carry effortlessly complete and implicitly tragic lives within their performances. But the vacuum that enfolds Antoine and Mathilde deprives their idyll of any purpose beyond that of erotic fantasy, dismissively based on the premise that women are overjoyed merely to work for – and attend to – the pleasures of men. If this is parody, it ends in unrepentant pathos with the insatiable Antoine waiting for the next lascivious hairdresser to walk in. Since we have no idea what qualities she must have in order to be attracted by Jean

Rochefort's elfin wrinkles and uncoordinated enthusiasm for Arabian pop music, the probability that she will die of an overdose of happiness like both (maybe) her predecessors can be viewed with depressing unconcern.

The film is at its best when glimpsing more complex matters – three children in earnest discussion in the street, a customer whose melancholy refuses to be shaved off with his beard, the iron bars that Agopian closes firmly on himself at the geriatric hospital. Leconte's sense of fun, at times implying that all he had in mind was a vehicle for the resistible precocity of Rochefort (as if the role might equally have suited, in another era, Coluche or Louis de Funès), is fortunately

... without ties or context
(Anna Galiena)

sobered by these fragmentary interventions.

And certainly *The Hairdresser's Husband* is photographed (primarily by Leconte himself) like a class act, its images seductively oversold by spectacular framing. The camera's floating scrutiny, implicating us all, is matched by Michael Nyman's soundtrack (as with *Monsieur Hire*, the central character repeatedly plays the same recording), in which the themes perpetually encircling the action create an *amour fou* of their own. The subject may be insubstantial, but the skills of its telling are unarguably real.

Philip Strick

Certificate
18
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Companies
20th Century Fox
A Victor & Grais
production
In association with
Steamroller
Productions
Producers
Michael Grais
Mark Victor
Steven Seagal
Co-producer
Peter MacGregor-Scott
Associate Producers
John Todgya
Julius R. Nasso
Production Associate
Toni Maier
2nd Unit Production Supervisor
Terry Benedict
Jamaican Sequences Supervisors
Joel Soisson
Michael Murphey
Production Controller
Marsha Mann-Koff
Production Co-ordinator
Ellen Wolff
Unit Production Managers
P.M. Scott
Additional
Photography:
David C. Thomas
Location Manager
Steven Shkolnik
Executive in Charge of Post-production
John A. Amicarella
2nd Unit Director
Conrad E. Palmisano
Casting
Fred Champion
Pamela Basker
Sue Swan
Assistant Directors
Jerry Ziesmer
Michael McCloud
Thompson
2nd Unit:
David Kelley
Matthew Dunne
Screenplay
Michael Grais
Mark Victor
Director of Photography
Ric Waite
Colour
DeLuxe
Additional Photography
Bobby Thomas
2nd Unit Photography
John M. Stevens
Camera Operators
Rick Neff
2nd Unit:
Steve Shanks
Phil Schwartz
Editor
O. Nicholas Brown
Production Designer
Robb Wilson King
Art Director
James Burkhart
Art Department Co-ordinator
Leslie Carol Warren
Set Design
Gilbert Wong
Set Decorators
Robert Kensingner
2nd Unit:
Martin Price
Set Dressers
Christopher Cleary
On-set:
Tighe Barry
Storyboard Artist
Matt Golden
Muralists
Rance Barella
Joe Bachelor
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Dale Martin

Special Effects
Greg Curtis
Scott Fisher
Joe Quinlivan
Bob Worthington
Music
James Newton
Howard
Music Supervisors
Michael Ross
Matt Dike
Music Editor
Tom Kramer
Songs
"En la casa" by Sergio
Reyes, Jeffrey Fortson,
Michael Ross,
performed by Mellow
Man Ace; "Roots and
Culture" by Rexton
Gordon, performed by
Shabba Ranks;
"Domino" by Chris
Goss, Tim Harrington,
performed by Masters
of Reality; "The
Shadow of Death" by
Jeffrey Fortson, Papa
Juggy, performed by
Def Jef featuring Papa
Juggy; "I Wanna Do
Something Freaky to
You" by Leon
Haywood, performed
by Kenyatta; "I Joke
But I Don't Play" by
A. Smith, F. White,
O. Aguilan, M. Ross,
M. Dike, performed by
Tone Loc; "No Justice",
"Rebel In Me" by and
performed by Jimmy
Cliff; "John Crow" by
Jimmy Cliff, Steven
Seagal, performed by
Jimmy Cliff, Steven
Seagal, The Oneness
Band; "Steppin' Razor"
by Joe Higgs,
performed by Peter
Tosh
Choreographer
Dorain Gursman
Costume
Design:
Isabella Van Soest
Chubb
Supervisor:
Laura Goldsmith
Costumers
Patty Weintraub
Set:
Johnny Foam
Make-up Supervisor
Jef Simons
Make-up
Bob Arrollo
Special Make-up Effects
John Blake
Supervising Sound Editors
Rick Franklin
Fred Judkins
Sound Editors
Nils Charles Jensen
Doug Jackson
Gary Mundheim
Chuck Neely
Jeffrey Clark
Howard Neiman
Bob O'Brien
Suhaif F. Kafity
Leonard Geschke
ADR Supervisor
Larry Singer
ADR Co-supervisor
Alan L. Nineberg
ADR Editor
Christopher Jargo
Sound Recordists
John Pritchett
Music:
Bobby Newell
Michael Mason
Sound Re-recordists
Paul Massey
Chris Carpenter
Ed Suski
ADR Voices
Mickie McGowan
Technical Adviser
Manny Mata
Research
Jim Slimski
Production Assistants
Suzanne Ziesmer

Chris Ziesmer
Matt O'Toole
Christy Noonan
Stunt Co-ordinator
Conrad E. Palmisano
Stunts
George Aguilar
Bob Apisa
Bruce Barbour
Kenny Bates
Richard Blackwell
Jophery Brown
Tony Brubaker
Harold Burns
Richard Butler
John Cann
Leah Creed
Roger Creed
Bob Cummings
Greg Dandridge
Binh Dang
Jeff Dashnaw
Craig Dunn
Richard Duran
Greg Elam
Kirk Elam
Ousaun Elam
Donna Evans
Glory Fioramonti
Carlos Gonzalez
Fernando Grimaldo
Dick Hancock
Jeff Imada
Jamie Johnson
Melvin Jones
Wayne King
Henry King
Barbara Klein
Steven Lambert
Irving Lewis
Jim Lewis
Eric Mansker
Haruo Matsuoka
Lisa McCullough
Winston Omega
Conrad Palmisano
Michael Pecina
Manny Perry
Sorin Serene Pricopie
Mario Roberts
Robbie Robinson
Rick Seaman
Lincoln Simonds
Russell Towery
Tierre Turner
Rock Walker
William Washington
Gerard Williams
Harry Wowchuk

Cast
Steven Seagal
John Hatcher
Basil Wallace
Screwface
Keith David
Max
Tom Wright
Charles
Joanna Pacula
Leslie
Elizabeth Gracen
Melissa
Bette Ford
Kate Hatcher
Danielle Harris
Tracey
Al Israel
Tito
Arlen Dean Synder
Duvall
Victor Romero
Evans
Nesta

Michael Ralph
Monkey
Jeffrey Anderson-Gunter
Nago
Tony Di Benedetto
Jimmy Fingers
Kevin Dunn
Roselli
Peter Jason
Pete Stone
Danny Trejo
Hector
Richard Delmonte
Chico
Elena Sahagun
Carmen
Tom Dugan
Paco
Rita Verreos
Marta
Joe Renteria
Raul
Carlos Cervantes
Little Richard
Wayne Montanio
Mexican Bouncer
Nick Corello
Nicky
Grant Gelt
Tommy
Justin Murphy
Freddy
Earl Boen
Doctor Stein
Stanley White
Sheriff O'Dwyer
Matt Levin
Phillip Tanzini
Boys
Leslie Danon
Terri Ivens
Girls
Dale Harimoto
News Reporter
Tracey Burch
Teri Weigel
Sexy Girls
Robert Ashiya Ganta
Strickland
Arms Dealer
Noel L. Walcott III
Posse Leader
Prince ItalJoe
Dread with Hostage

Andria Martel
Young Stripper
Nick Celozzi
Man in High Hart Bar
Debby Shively
Barmaid
Craig Pinkard
Bartender
Matt O'Toole
Yuppie Dealer
Linus Huffman
DEA Agent
Kerrie Cullen
Department Store
Hostage
Roger Romero
Godbout
Harry John Leamy
John Endevert
Christopher Allen Goss
Band in McGilly's
Libert Steer
Phil Chen
Rock Deadrick
Einstein Brown
Eric Bernard
Haile Maskel
Reggae Band
Jimmy Cliff
Himself
Tony Williams
Richard Barr
Ansel Collins
Radcliffe Bryan
Loris Lawrence
Carol McLaughlin
Lloyd Willis
Phillip Michael White
Jimmy Cliff Band

8,374 feet
93 minutes

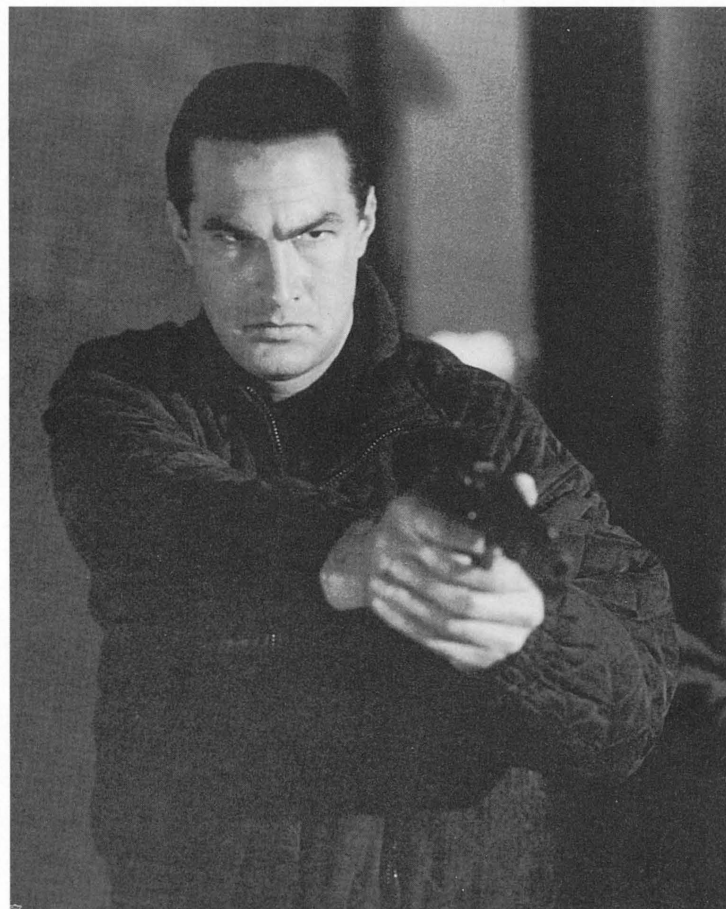
USA 1990

Director: Dwight H. Little

Following the death of his friend Chico during a Bangkok drugs raid, DEA agent John Hatcher retires and returns to his old Chicago neighbourhood, moving in with his sister and her family. Jamaican crack gangs run by newcomer Screwface have moved into the neighbourhood and, using violence and African ritual music, are trying to squeeze out Colombian drug kingpin Jimmy Fingers. Hatcher reluctantly intervenes when he and his old army pal Max get caught up in a night-club shoot-out between the rival gangs.

After the two gangs agree to co-operate, Screwface's men shoot up Hatcher's sister's house, wounding his niece. Ignoring the investigations of FBI agent Roselli and his black assistant Charles, Hatcher kills Jimmy Fingers and one of the Jamaican gunmen. African black magic symbols nailed to the door of his sister's house are interpreted by anthropologist Leslie as marking Hatcher for death. Hatcher saves his sister from being ritually sacrificed, and himself narrowly escapes ambush by Screwface's men.

Together with Charles, a Jamaican policeman who has been trying to nail Screwface for five years, Hatcher and Max then follow their adversary to Jamaica. One of Screwface's old girlfriends gives them information,



Undeveloped image: Steven Seagal...

but warns that their quarry's secret power is that he has "two heads and four eyes". Hatcher, Max and Charles infiltrate Screwface's heavily guarded villa, and Hatcher chops off the drug dealer's head with a sword.

At a reggae club that serves as a front for the drug operation, Hatcher shows the severed head to Screwface's men. But 'Screwface' (in fact his twin brother) appears as if by magic and attacks Charles. While the wounded Max holds off Screwface's men, Hatcher fights and kills Screwface's brother. Hatcher carries Max into the street, Charles limping alongside.

Steven Seagal's third film sees him rehearsing the familiar graceful moves, with some sharp-edged samurai swordplay thrown in for good measure. It is disappointing, though, that the former martial-arts instructor to the stars has so far



... changing fashion (Basil Wallace)

failed to develop a screen image of his own. Stranded in an Action Man limbo, Seagal avoids the sadistic narcissism of Jean-Claude Van Damme, but sometimes seems in danger of falling into the sensitive, family-man wholesomeness of Chuck Norris.

More damagingly, Seagal is quite unable to match the self-parodic ultra-violence of the unassailable Arnold Schwarzenegger. The nearest Seagal gets to an Arnie-style one-liner is after he has disposed of Jimmy Fingers and launched his black confederate out the window: "One thought he was invincible", he says, "the other thought he could fly... They were both wrong".

Once Hatcher is drawn back into a life of violence to protect his family, the film delivers all the expected genre elements - some clinically vicious close-quarter fighting, a spectacular stunt in which a car crashes through a Nieman-Marcus showroom window. But the stop-start plot is long on contrivance and short on pace. One minor point of anthropological interest is the changing fashion in movie villains, currently moving away from all-purpose Colombian drug fiends to the eye-rolling, black magic-worshipping Jamaicans also seen in *Predator 2*.

Nigel Floyd

Mery per sempre (Forever Mary)

Certificate
(Not yet issued)
Distributor
BFI
Production Company
Numero Uno International
Producer
Claudio Bonivento
Associate Producer
Massimo Ferrero
Production Supervisor
Massimo Martino
Production Co-ordinator
Alberto Passone
Assistant Directors
Umberto Castagna
Giovanni Giancono
Giovanni Ricci
Screenplay
Sandro Petraglia
Stefano Rulli
Based on the novel by
Aurelio Grimaldi
Director of Photography
Mauro Marchetti
Colour
Telecolor
Colour Consultant
Pasquale Cuzzupoli
Camera Operators
Bruno Bruni
Fabio Zamaron
Editor
Claudio Di Mauro
Art Director
Massimo Spano
Set Dresser
Luigi Urbani
Music
Giancarlo Bigazzi
Music Arrangements
Dado Parisini
Music Editor
Abon Group, Inc
Costume Design
Roberta Di Bagno
Guidi
Wardrobe
Giuseppina Minguzzi
Make-up
Raul Ranieri
Sound Editors
Carlo Balestrieri
Carla Merli
Sound Recordists
Antonio Barba
Tommaso Quattrini
Dolby stereo
Sound Effects Editor
Daniele Quadrolì
Production Consultant
Pietro Valsecchi

Cast
Michele Placido
Marco Terzi
Claudio Amendola
Pietro
Francesco Benigno
Natale
Alessandro Di Sanzo
Mary
Tony Sperandeo
Roberto Mariano
Maurizio Prollo
Filippo Genzardi
Giovanni Alamia

9,526 feet
106 minutes

Subtitles

Italy 1988

Director: Marco Risi

In what his colleagues consider a heroic but foolish gesture, Marco Terzi accepts a teaching post in a Palermo reform school for no-hopers, the product of a Mafia-dominated working class. Pietro the perpetual rebel is no sooner out than he is back in the reformatory; Claudio, a wide-eyed innocent, is a first-time offender; Natale avenged the murder of his mafioso father; Antonio was arrested at the church on his wedding day; and "Mary", a young transvestite prostitute whose father hates him, has fatally injured a violent client.

In a war of nerves, Marco sets about winning the friendship and respect of his pupils, while the governor and the guards think of him as an interfering busybody. The confrontation between Marco and the boys comes to a head when he challenges the cult of the Mafia. He tries to explain its origins and how it exploited rather than helped the poor people of Sicily. Calmly refusing to be intimidated by Natale, who spends the lesson drawing on the teacher in pen, Marco wins over all the boys - including Natale. This victory leads to a declaration of love from Mary who, when rejected, reports a conversation he has overheard between Marco and Pietro, in which the latter declared his intention to escape.

In the ensuing chaos, Claudio, already identified as a stool pigeon for exposing a boy who has threatened him with sexual assault, knocks out the boy's eye when he tries to rape him. Soon after his escape, Pietro is killed in a hold-up. Marco, who was at his bedside, confronts the other boys with the pointlessness of his death. On his eighteenth birthday, Natale hears of his transfer to prison. Himself given the choice of a transfer from the reformatory, Marco decides to stay.

A film set in a boys' reformatory must have its share of brutality, exaggerated masculinity and forbidden sex, but it is still an ideal place to explore notions of manliness, the myths it fosters and the responsibilities it imposes. In this respect, *Forever Mary* remains roughly within the recognisable bounds of the genre treading the familiar fine line between cold realism for its subject matter and liberal romanticism for its ideology.

Risi's film is lifted a cut above most which have dealt with a similar subject by the fine performances of the group of real offenders who make up the class. This is not to deny Risi credit for artfully taking his raw material and placing it in a social frame. He skilfully establishes the

complicated relationships not only within the institution but also with the outside world: the institution's relationship with poverty-stricken urban Palermo.

Contemporary cinema has never before made Sicily look so bleak. The seductive Sicilian landscape mythologised in the *Godfather* trilogy or lingered over in the Taviani brothers' *Kaos* is a different world, replaced here by a working-class urban starkness that has its roots more in the Naples of early Rosi or in Pasolini's Rome. Contemporary Palermo is a depressing habitat, but before they are removed from it, the boys are shown not as social outcasts but as individuals within a society: Antonio on his wedding day; Mary (the transvestite prostitute) with a client and at home with his brothers and violent father; Pietro (an habitual criminal) at the cinema chatting up a girl. It is, of course, a criminalised society, and we understand the reformatory's function within it without having to be told.

Marco, the teacher, in classically liberal manner, learns as much from the boys as they learn from him. Disadvantaged as they are, their pride, self-knowledge and understanding of the system makes them function better in society than Marco who, as the reformatory guards indicate, doesn't know his place. So he is caught between two stools when he sides with Claudio, who denounces another boy who has threatened rape, and when he encourages Pietro to report the guards who beat him up after he attacks a female member of staff.

Eventually, however, the teacher's authority lies in his understanding of a wider social context, helping to resolve the film's central conflict. Risi resists making the confrontation between Marco and Natale (imprisoned for avenging his mafioso father's death) an overtly violent one. Instead a battle of nerves takes place, won by Marco's ability to offer a very different reading of the Mafia's involvement in Sicily, as capitalist exploiters rather than working-class heroes. Knowing the dangers of myth-making, Marco is quick to shatter any illusions the boys might have of Pietro's heroic escape and consequent death.

Within this, the idea of womanhood is ever-present, but women, if they figure at all, are the familiar Italian stereotypes: the materialistic teenager, the prostitute, the sophisticated 'ball-breaker', and the long-suffering mother. Risi's defence, if he has one, is that Italian cinema has always been obsessed with masculinity, and that a film in this particular genre is unlikely to break the mould.

Karen Alexander



Empire's smooth tapestry: Beatie Edney, Maynard Eziashi

Certificate

PG

Distributor

20th Century Fox

Production Company

Mister Johnson

Enterprises

Executive Producer

Bill Benenson

Producer

Michael Fitzgerald

Co-producer

Penelope Glass

Production

Executive

Eva Monley

Production

Co-ordinator

Sheila Fraser Milne

Production Manager

Matt Dadzie

Unit Production

Manager

Stephen Pushkin

Location Manager

Matt Dadzie

Casting

Susie Bruffin

Nigeria:

Gladys Dadzie

Assistant Directors

Guy Travers

Nick Laws

Adam Sidi

Nigeria:

Tunde Kelani

Screenplay

William Boyd

Based on the novel by

Joyce Cary

Director of

Photography

Peter James

Colour

Eastman Colour

Camera Operator

Eddie Collins

Opticals

Geoff Axtell Associates

Editor

Humphrey Dixon

Production Designer

Herbert Pinter

Art Director

Nigeria:

Fabian Adibe

Set Decorator

Graham Sumner

Music

Georges Delerue

Music Extract

"Ahi Fuyez Douce

Image" from *Manon*

by Jules Massenet,

performed

by Enrico Caruso

Music Editor

Eric Tomlinson

1920s Music

Adviser

Chris Ellis

Songs

"Pasadena" by Harry

Warren, performed by

the Savoy Havana

Band; "Stack O' Lee

Blues" by Ray Lopez,

performed by

Waring's

Pennsylvanians

Costume Design

Rosemary Burrows

Wardrobe

Kiki Schrader

Chief Make-up

Artist

Norma Hill

Make-up Artist

Aileen Seaton

Title Design

Maurice Binder

Supervising Sound

Editor

Leslie Hodgson

Sound Editor

Colin Miller

Foley Editor

Peter Musgrave

Sound Recordist

Hank Garfield

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Robin O'Donoghue

Dominic Lester

Stand-ins

Pierce Brosnan:

Benjamin Beresford

Maynard Eziashi:

Abraham Chunu

Cast

Maynard Eziashi

Mister Johnson

Pierce Brosnan

Harry Rudbeck

Edward Woodward

Sargy Gollup

Beatie Edney

Celia Rudbeck

Denis Quilley

Bulteen

Nick Reding

Tring

Bella Enahoro

Bamu

Femi Fatoba

Waziri

Kwabena Manso

Benjamin

Chief Hubert

Ogunde

Brimah

Sola Adeyemi

Ajali

Jerry Linus

Saleh

George Menta

Emir

Steve James

Aliu

Tunde Kelani

Jamesu

Akinola Ayegbusi

Village Chief

Albert Egbe

Scribe

Sani Izang

Police Sergeant

Ibidun Ogunde

Bamu's Mother

Hajia Nana Yahaya

Gladys Dadzie

Women Creditors

John Johnson

Man Creditor

Wali Umar

Suli

Lassisi Moshudu

Pagan Trader

Matt Dadzie

Oladejo Adegboyega

Guards

Laraba Ogomo

Bamu's Baby

Fred Ibrahim

Philip Elegonya

Policemen

Mary Kalu

Matumbi

Moses Okwe

Alhaji

Mallam Musa Udu

Trader

Charles Ani

Levi

Chris Erakptybor

Interpreter

Saidu Dahiru

Chair Boy

9,121 feet

101 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Bruce Beresford

West Africa, 1923. In the British settlement of Fada, Mister Johnson, a passionately anglophile African clerk, works for district officer Harry Rudbeck. Although plagued by debts, Johnson courts the village girl Bamu, and finally marries her. At the wedding party, Waziri, the local emir's representative, tries to persuade Johnson to show him Rudbeck's confidential reports, but the clerk refuses. Johnson continues to evade his creditors, but cannot persuade Rudbeck to give him an advance on his wages.

When Johnson is unable to keep up his bridal payments, Bamu's father threatens to take her back; desperate for money, Johnson agrees to steal Rudbeck's reports for Waziri. When Rudbeck's cherished road construction project unexpectedly runs out of funds, Johnson encourages the officer to carry on by cooking the accounts. Rudbeck's wife Celia arrives from England, and the couple's life settles into a pattern of mutual sniping and passionate reconciliation. Tring, a punctilious government officer, inspects the accounts and accuses Johnson of embezzlement; Johnson is sacked and goes to work for the brutal and unpredictable storekeeper, Sargy Gollup.

Gollup returns one night to find Johnson holding a party in the store and attacks him, but is himself knocked out. Johnson is again fired, but when Rudbeck later finds him and Bamu wandering on the road, he offers him a job as gang boss. The project again runs out of money, Johnson persuades local tribes to supply labour, and the road is completed. Rudbeck discovers that Johnson has raised the necessary funds through a fictitious tax, and dismisses him.

Again in danger of losing Bamu, and refused money by Waziri, Johnson attempts to rob the store; caught by Gollup, he kills him in a struggle. Johnson goes on the run, but is captured by Bamu's brother and tried by Rudbeck. Condemned to hang, Johnson persuades Rudbeck himself to shoot him.

Joyce Cary's novel, published in 1939, seems perilous material to film today, although in his preface to it scriptwriter William Boyd argues that the novel's enduring quality can be attributed to a lack of "good liberal reticence and prudent self-awareness". *Mister Johnson* does indeed remain readable as something more than a picture of a stock Empire figure of fun – the African who 'thinks' he is English – but that is largely because of Cary's style, a disjointed present tense that

continually sets up points of view only to dismantle them with abrupt casualness. The Empire stereotype of the 'unruly native' is thus defused, and rewritten as a figure who, for all his apparent weaknesses, nevertheless emerges as an energetic manipulator of language and events – as Cary puts it, "a poet who creates for himself a glorious destiny".

The film signally fails to meet the challenge of these complexities. Following his glutinous exercise in sentimental liberalism, *Driving Miss Daisy*, Bruce Beresford here produces an ideologically bowdlerised version of the book. Rudbeck – in the original "a short, stout white man with reddish hair" – becomes Pierce Brosnan's archetypal Boys' Own hero; his peevishly suburban wife becomes a benevolent English rose; and his mentor Bulteen, whose weary complacency characterises an empire on the skids, here figures briefly as a jovially competent father figure. Johnson himself, in Maynard Eziashi's impassioned but mildly embarrassing performance, becomes a perpetually smiling, eager-to-please innocent.

If the film is more open to accusations of racism than the novel, it is precisely because Beresford painstakingly sidesteps to tilt the balance of sympathy in Johnson's favour, as if the character somehow needed protecting from the audience's bad opinion. This holds true for all the major African characters, whose more questionable traits are considerably softened – from the devious Waziri and his cherished page/catamite Saleh, to Bamu, whose impatient cynicism is replaced by a vaguely implied loyalty to her husband.

Much of this softening is the result of casting and direction, rather than of Boyd's script – which is largely faithful to the original – with a conventionally lush visual style, the terrain shot in a range of golden sepias and equipped with plenty of obtrusive spectacle. The use of nearly all the film's Africans as little more than extras means that Johnson himself figures as a bit player in a white man's drama. Rudbeck's dream of a road is unambiguously presented as a glorious vision of progress. It is only later, as if by mere reflex, that Rudbeck is shown musing on the road's possible ill effects.

When Johnson finally prevails on Rudbeck to do the decent thing and shoot him, it has remarkably little impact. The conclusion is the conventional one – in another world, they might have been friends – but the novel's bitterly casual ironies slip by. The result is an anecdote that seems, at best, an incidental wrinkle in the smooth tapestry of Empire narrative.

Jonathan Romney

Certificate
PG
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Company
Working Title
For 20th Century Fox
Executive Producer
John McTiernan
Producers
Sarah Radclyffe
Tim Bevan
Associate Producer
Chris Thompson
Production Co-ordinator
Joyce Turner
Location Manager
Chris Brock
2nd Unit Director
Arthur Wooster
Casting
Susie Figgis
Crowd:
Beverley Keogh
Assistant Directors
Bert Batt
Timothy Lewis
Richard Whelan
2nd Unit:
Terence Madden
Callum McDougall
Screenplay
Mark Allen Smith
John McGrath
Director of Photography
Jason Lehel
In colour
2nd Unit Photography
Arthur Wooster
Camera Operators
Ben Seresin
2nd Unit:
Malcolm Macintosh
Peter Robinson
Editor
Peter Tanner
Production Designer
Austen Spriggs
Art Director
Keith Pain
Set Decorator
Alan Cassie
Draughtsman
Philip Harvey
Storyboard Artist
Sydney Cain
Sculptures/Models
Fred Evans
Music
Geoffrey Burgon
Costume Design
Emma Porteous
Wardrobe
Supervisor:
Colin Wilson
Mistress:
Cynthia Dowling
Make-up Supervisor
Joan Hills
Make-up
Meinir Jones-Lewis
Kathy Ducker
Lesley Lamont-Fisher
Pat Hay
Celia Denman
June Byrne
Karen Maffey
Sound Editor
Leslie Wiggins
Dialogue Editor
Archie Ludski
Foley Editor
Anthony Phelan
Sound Recordist
Ken Weston
Sound Re-recorder
Don Sharpe



Undistressed damsel: Uma Thurman

Stunt Co-ordinator

Martin Grace

Stunts

Ken Barker

Brian Bowes

Tim Condren

Stuart Clark

Gerry Crampton

David Cronnelly

Graeme Crowther

Gabe Cronnelly

Helen Caldwell

Eddie Eddon

Max Faulkner

Sarah Franzl

Romo Gorrara

Tom Hegarty

Mark Henson

Nick Hobbs

Sy Hollands

Paul Jennings

Jazzey Jayes

Phil Loneragan

Tom Lucy

Mark McBride

Bronco McLoughlin

Valentino Musetti

Mike Potter

Dinny Powell

Eddie Powell

Gregory Powell

James Ryan

Terry Richards

Lee Sheward

Tony Van Silva

Jason White

Steve Whyment

Nick Wilkinson

Swordmaster

William Hobbs

Horsemaster

Richard Graydon

Archery Instructor

John Waller

Cast

Patrick Bergin

Robert Hode,

"Robin Hood"

Uma Thurman

Maid Marian

Jürgen Prochnow

Sir Miles Folcanet

Edward Fox

Prince John

Jeroen Krabbé

Baron Daguerre

Owen Teale

Will Redding,

"Will Scarlett"

David Morrissey

Little John

Alex Norton

Harry

Gabrielle Reidy

Lily

Cecily Hobbs

Mabel

Conrad Asquith

Lodwick

Anthony O'Donnell

Emlyn

Barry Stanton

Miter

Jeff Nuttall

Friar Tuck

Daniel Webb

Much the Miller

Carolyn Backhouse

Nicole

Phelim McDermott

Jester

Jonathan Cullen

Gerald

Richard Moore

Abbot

Stephen Pallister

Jack Runnel

Kevin Pallister

Charlie Runnel

Gabrielle Lloyd

Gammer Tanzie

Caspar De La Mare

Sam Timmons

9,331 feet

104 minutes

United Kingdom 1990

Director: John Irvin

Twelfth-century England. Saxon nobleman Robert Hode and his friend Will Redding intercede to save Much, a poacher, from a hunting party headed by Norman noble Sir Miles Folcanet, accompanied by his fiancée Marian. Folcanet insists on bringing Hode to trial, with Hode's Norman friend the Baron Daguerre reluctantly acting as judge; when Daguerre insists on Hode receiving a nominal punishment, Hode's furious outburst causes him to be stripped of his lands and condemned to be an outlaw. Hode and Redding escape into the forest; after an amiable skirmish with Little John, they are taken to meet John's band of outlaws.

Renamed Robin Hood and Will Scarlett, they are accepted when Hode proves his archery prowess in a contest with Harry, a hostile band member. Robin leads the outlaws in an attack on Folcanet's party. As Robin's renown among the Saxon people increases, the Normans raise their taxes, hoping to stir hostility against him, and offer a reward for his capture. Rather than marry Folcanet, Marian disguises herself as a boy, Martin, and runs off to join Robin's band. Daguerre's mistress Nicole, disguised as Marian, lures Hode to a tryst, where he and Marian are ambushed; they escape thanks to Emlyn, a bowsmith whose weapons – intended for Folcanet – they appropriate.

Prince John, the would-be king of England, arrives to claim his taxes, which Robin has stolen and redistributed among the people. Realising Martin's real identity, Harry captures her and takes her back to Folcanet, but is executed for his pains. Robin's band enters Daguerre's castle, under the guise of an All Fool's Day procession, with the band's newest recruit Friar Tuck as the Lord of Misrule, and rescue Marian. Daguerre, seeing the error of his ways, is reconciled with the Saxons, and Robin and Marian are married.

John Irvin once turned down the chance to direct a remake of the 1938 Errol Flynn *Adventures of Robin Hood*. A straight remake might in fact have proved more productive than this non-committal attempt to retell the story in a humorous key. The result is too self-conscious to carry any genuine mythic resonance, but not sufficiently playful to cast a new critical light on the myth. Despite the initial promise of an other-worldly mediaeval atmosphere to match the heightened grubbiness of Terry Gilliam's *Jabberwocky*, the film increasingly comes to resemble a 1960s Hammer cheapie.

So too the script, by Mark Allen Smith and John McGrath, conspires to undermine the sense that the action is taking place in a self-enclosed mythical world.

The illusion is consistently punctured by an uneven mixture of arch badinage and jokey anachronism. At their least successful, the quips verge on James Bond facetiousness, while the innuendo exchanged between Robin and Marian remains strictly on a *Carry On* level, a poor substitute for genuine sexual tension. It is tempting to attribute the script's wittier moments to McGrath who, as founder of the theatre company 7:84, has long been one of Britain's leading left-wing playwrights (he was reportedly called in to 'anglicise' an originally American-flavoured script to be directed by John McTiernan, now the film's executive producer).

McGrath, presumably, also contributed to the narrative's political sub-text, in which the tax-obsessed Normans might be read as a thinly disguised Tory government and the outlaw band as a rural proletariat alienated from its means of production. This conception falls flat, however, considering that the people of England need to be liberated by a pair of disenfranchised nobles, themselves betrayed by Harry, a caricatured gruff Northerner.

Patrick Bergin's Robin Hood comes across as a well-mannered public schoolboy who becomes a hero largely by accident (his famous deed of returning riches to the poor turns out to be an afterthought). He also seems to be randomly volatile, turning on Daguerre in a fit of pique, as well as implausibly gullible, quite unable to see through Marian's transparent disguise as a boy.

Uma Thurman plays Marian as a petulant deb, with an improbably lascivious turn of mind for a mediaeval damsel, even by Chaucerian standards. The outlaw band never quite attains an identity, either as a group or individually, although the casting of 60s sub-culture hero Jeff Nuttall as Friar Tuck is a witty touch. Most damagingly, the film is quite unable to decide how far to go in the direction of myth. The forest, apparently co-extensive with the whole of England, never transcends the unexceptional locations, while the supposedly miraculous blossoming of a tree in the final scene makes for a cursory last-ditch attempt to establish Hood's status as a fertility figure. This incongruous dash of mysticism does nothing to lift the film above the dreary fustian that has preceded it.

Jonathan Romney

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead



Hamlet (Iain Glen, Joanna Roth)...

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Hobo

Production Company

Brandenberg

International

Executive Producers

Thomas J. Rizzo

Louise Stephens

Producers

Michael Brandman

Emanuel Azenberg

Co-producers

Iris Merlis

Patrick Whitley

Production Supervisor

Boris Dmitrovic

Production Co-ordinators

Velinka Ficor

London:

Vicki Manning

Unit Manager

Igor Nola

Location Manager

Zoran Blazevic

Casting

Doreen Jones

Assistant Directors

Bill Westley

Peter Cotton

Yugoslavia:

Zoran Blazevic

Zoran Budak

Dubravko Scherr

Screenplay

Tom Stoppard

Based on his own play

Director of Photography

Peter Biziou

Colour

Technicolor

Camera Operators

Mike Roberts

Roderick Barron

Editor

Nicolas Gaster

Production Designer

Vaughan Edwards

Art Director

Ivo Husnjak

Set Dresser

Mladen Ozbolt

Draughtsman

Vlado Buzolic

Special Effects

David McCall

Ricky Farns

Yugoslavia:

Marijan Karoglan

Puppet Master

Zlatko Bourek

Music

Stanley Myers

Additional:

Graham Preskett

Brian Gulland

Mime

Choreographer

Ivica Boban

Costume

Design:

Andreane Neofitou

Supervisor:

Yelena Mihalic

Wardrobe

Drago Habazin

Zeljko Zebec

Make-up

Magdalen Gaffney

Yugoslavia:

Maria Dziewulska

Ivana Primorac

Titles/Opticals

Peter Watson

Associates

Sound Editors

Jupiter Sen

Dialogue:

Richard Dunford

Sound Recordists

Louis Kramer

Music:

Austin Ince

Sound Re-recordists

Otto R. Snel

Michael A. Carter

Kevin Tayler

Cast

Gary Oldman

Rosencrantz

Tim Roth

Guildenstern

Richard Dreyfuss

The Player

Joanna Roth

Ophelia

Iain Glen

Prince Hamlet

Donald Sumpter

King Claudius

Joanna Miles

Queen Gertrude

Ljubo Zecevic

Osric

Ian Richardson

Polonius

Sven Medvesck

Laertes

Vili Matula

Horatio

John Burgess

Ambassador from

England

Livio Badurina

Tomislav Maretic

Mare Mlacnik

Srdjan Soric

Mladen Vasary

Zeljko Vukmirica

Branko Zavrzan

Tragedians

10,592 feet

118 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Tom Stoppard

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, close friends of Prince Hamlet, have been mysteriously summoned to the royal court of Denmark. As they make their way to the castle, the laws of probability and chance seem out of control as a repeatedly tossed coin lands 'heads' more than 150 times. The two men run into the Player and his group of tragedians who, exploiting the presence of an audience, offer to perform any number of gory plays and unnatural acts.

At the castle of Elsinore, an unhinged Hamlet is in pursuit of Ophelia, while Queen Gertrude and King Claudius ask Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to find out why Hamlet is acting so strangely (Claudius recently seized the throne on the death of his brother, and has wasted no time in marrying his widow). While spying on the prince, the two men keep ending up in the wrong place at the wrong time; Hamlet greets them cordially but a little suspiciously, and soon guesses why they are there. He implies that he is only 'mad' when it suits him; Claudius interrupts to announce the arrival of the players. The Player and his troupe perform a piece for the king and queen that Hamlet has prepared in order to trap Claudius into admitting he poisoned his brother.

The stratagem works, but the Player warns Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to "concentrate on not losing your heads". Claudius has the two men take Hamlet to England, "for his own good", but they discover on the ship that the letter they are carrying condemns him to death. The prince has worked this out, however, and jumps ship, leaving behind a death sentence in which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's names are substituted for his own. In a final set-to, Guildenstern stabs the Player, but the knife turns out to be a stage prop. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are hanged.

Tom Stoppard's elegant and peculiarly English mix of philosophical debate and adolescent love of word-play has never been better exploited than in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, the play which established his reputation in the late 60s. He has since moved on to more subtle and ambitious themes, which have predictably been received with less enthusiasm. In this light, the decision to return to his early work for his directorial debut on film can be seen as something of a safe bet.

Sadly, the wit and flair of the writing have been lost in his own inexperienced hands. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* is a bright play which flirts with and blurs the boundaries of illusion and reality, a soufflé of a work which teases, entertains and questions in equal measure; *Hamlet* it is not. The key to a successful theatre production is to keep the pace brisk and the action flowing, lest the audience twigs that there is nothing very profound going on. On film, the dislocation and obliqueness call for a wicked (even Buñuelian) touch and timing. Stoppard's adaptation, at a shade under two hours, is too long, too slow, and ponderous when it is trying to be humorous.

The running joke of *Rosencrantz* (Gary Oldman) constantly 'discovering' the world's most basic scientific laws, potentially a clever device, is the most obvious example. Visual gags are uncomfortably spun out; both Oldman and Tim Roth do their best to speak the speech trippingly, but they too are bogged down in the longueurs. Richard Dreyfuss as the Player over-acts wildly but appropriately in a performance he has been promising ever since his Richard III in *The Goodbye Girl*. The players themselves, recruited on location in Yugoslavia, are perhaps the highlight of the film. That a play-within-a-play should provide the most striking cinematic moment is the kind of paradox which would no doubt amuse Stoppard, but it says little for the rest of the action.

Peter Aspiden



Not Hamlet (Tim Roth, Gary Oldman)

Certificate
15
Distributor
Warner Bros.
Production Company
Touchstone Pictures
In association with
Silver Screen
Partners IV
Producer
Paul Mazursky
Co-producers
Pato Guzman
Patrick McCormick
Associate Producer
Stuart Pappé
Production
Co-ordinators
Office:
Michelle Weinberg
LA:
Mandy Marsh
Unit Production Manager
Patrick McCormick
Location Managers
David Declerque
LA:
Amy Ness
Taman McCall
Casting
Joy Todd
Associate:
Grant Willfley
Extras:
Central Casting
Voice:
Dialogue Services
Assistant Directors
Henry J. Bronchtein
Jane Paul
Jill Frank
Bettiani Fishman
Tim Williams
LA:
Bruce Carter
Screenplay
Roger L. Simon
Paul Mazursky
Director of Photography
Fred Murphy
Panavision
Colour
DuArt
Prints by Technicolor
Camera Operators
Richard Mingalone
Additional:
Craig DiBona
Steadicam Operator
Craig DiBona
LA:
Randy Nolan
Graphic Artist
Lane Hurwitz
Editor
Stuart Pappé
Production Designer
Pato Guzman
Art Director
Steven J. Jordan
Set Decorators
Les Bloom
Additional:
George Detitta Jr.
LA:
Jane Bogart
Set Dressers
Conrad Brink
Gary Brink
Kevin Brink
James Fredricks
Storyboard Artist
Lorenzo Contessa

Music/Music Adaptations
Marc Shaiman
Orchestrations
Marc Shaiman
Additional:
Hummie Mann
Music Editor
Dan Garde
Supervisor:
Dan Carlin Snr
Songs
"You Do Something to Me" by Cole Porter, performed by (1) Marlene Dietrich, (2) Bette Midler;
"Give Me Your Kisses (I'll Give You My Heart)" by Leonard Whitcup, George Douglas, performed by Louis Armstrong;
"The Christmas Break", "Wyze Man" by Joseph E. Warren, performed by Joe Cool & The Coolers;
"Winter Wonderland" by Felix Bernard, Dick Smith; "Mister Santa" by Pat Ballard; "Coney Island Baby" by Les Applegate, performed by Vintage;
"Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer" by Johnny Marks, performed by Gene Autry; "Cu-cu-rru-cu-cu, Paloma" by Tomas Mendez;
"Guadalajara" by Pepe Guizar; "La Calandria" by Nicandro Castillo, performed by El Mariachi Bustamante;
"Hurricane" by and performed by Passion Play; "Arabian Belly Dance" by J. Leach; "Deck the Halls" by Peter Kater; "Let's Do It", "Easy to Love" by Cole Porter;
"Tenderly" by Jack Lawrence, Walter Gross; "Theme from *Amarcord*, *Juliet of the Spirits*" by Nino Rota
Choreographer
Christopher Chadman
Costume Design
Albert Wolsky
Wardrobe Supervisors
Irene Ferrari
Bill Campbell
LA:
Diana Wilson
Costumers
Bette Midler:
Pamela Wise
Woody Allen:
Bill Christians
Make-up Artists
Fern Buckner
Bette Midler:
Bob Mills
Additional:
Rosemarie Zurlo
LA:
Michael Lorenz
Title Design
Wayne Fitzgerald
Opticals
Cinema Research Corporation
Supervising Sound Editors
John Stacy
David A. Whittaker

Sound Editors
Mary Ruth Smith
Karen Wilson
Jane E. Carpenter
Burness Dembrowski
Charles E. Smith
Ron Bartlett
ADR Editors
Andrea L. Horta
Lisa M. Risen
Foley Editor
Colin Mouat
Sound Recordists
Les Lazarowitz
Michael Bedard
Jack Keller
David Behle
Music:
Joel Moss
Sam Ward
Dolby stereo
Post-production Dialogue
Norman B. Schwartz
Sound Re-recordists
Robert J. Litt
Greg P. Russell
Elliot Tyson
Sound Effects
Bald Eagle Sound
Foley
Taj Soundworks
Production Assistants
Anthony D'Esposito
Robert C. Albertell
Erika Aronson
Bobby Caravella
Stephen Cody
Carol Dauber
Craig Gering
Dori Greenberg
Jennifer Greenhut
Doug Kanter
Yehonatan Koenig
David Blake Leener
Patti Lewis
Jono Oliver
Juan Ros
Gina Salerno
Jon C. Scheide
David Venghaus Jr.
Alexander Wardwell
Office:
Lisa Kolasa
Holly D. Hughes (LA)

Cast
Bette Midler
Deborah Fifer
Woody Allen
Nick Fifer
Bill Irwin
Mime
Daren Firestone
Sam
Rebecca Nickels
Jennifer
Paul Mazursky
Dr Hans Clava
Gregory Moore
Michael Brown
Jonathan Guss
David Frye
Barber Shop Quartet
Joseph Warren
Brian Warren
Darrell Mason
Joe Cool & the Coolers
Marc Shaiman
Pianist
Augustin Bustamante
Leonel Cruz
Telmo Hernandez
Steve Ortiz
Ramon Ponce
Fernando Quinones
El Mariachi
Bustamante
Joan Delaney
Interviewer
Amanda Bruce
Interviewee
Betsy Mazursky
Information Woman
Jack Brodsky
Pharmacist
Glen Alterman
Museum Shop Owner
Marilyn Pasekoff
Woman in Bookshop
Patrick Farrelly
Santa
Hidehiko Takada
Sushi Chef

Tichina Arnold
Ticket Seller
Wanakee Legardy
Dress Shop
Saleswoman
Carol Harris
Waitress Nuvo Navajo
Vira Colorado
Billy Graham
Security Guards
Chun Long Zhang
Acrobat
Kamarr
Magician
Kathy Kamarr
Magician's Assistant
Robert Garrett
Bartender
Fabio Lanzoni
Handsome Man
Steven Dominic Prestianni
Heather Golden
Sikhs
José Rafael Arango
Bus Boy
Bobby Caravella
Man in Parking
Garage
Laura Baler
Chocolate Candy Girl
James Duane Polk
Man on Movie Line
Penny Gaston
Minna Rose
Stewart Russell
Joe Viviani
Pharmacy Patrons
Larry Sherman
Shiro Oishi
Ron Barry-Barry
Men on Carphones
Michael Greene
Stuart Pappé
Motorcyclists
André Phillippe
Taxi Driver
Phillip Nozaki
Donnie Kelber
Kids in Van
Rene Victor
Ann Lochart
Pam Hayden
Voice-overs

7,833 feet
87 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Paul Mazursky

After seeing their children off for a skiing weekend, sports lawyer Nick and psychologist Deborah Fifer, a Los Angeles couple celebrating their sixteenth wedding anniversary, are distracted from their love-making by business calls. They then set out for the Beverly Center mall to buy supplies for their anniversary party. Weaving through carol singers, an annoying mime, and the pre-Christmas shoppers, Deborah collects the gift she had picked for Nick – a surfboard; Nick's present to Deborah is a lavishly framed family photograph.

After stocking up with sushi for the party, Nick spots a bookstore video monitor advertising Deborah's new best-seller on marriage, *I Do, I Do*, and insists on buying a copy. Expecting to clear his conscience and renew his marriage commitment, along the lines suggested by Deborah's book, Nick reveals that he has just concluded a six-month affair with a twenty-five-year-old woman. Shocked, Deborah calls off the party and draws up plans for separation. But, finding it hard to break their ties, they eventually make up and buy some more sushi.

The guilty Deborah then reveals that she has been having an affair with an eminent colleague, Dr Hans Clava (previously glimpsed in the video display promoting her book). Nick throws a tantrum and declares their marriage finished; ►



Beyond the mall: Bette Midler, Woody Allen

◀ his temper is further frayed by the pestering mime and his inability to find their Saab in the car park. To soothe their ruffled egos, Nick and Deborah both buy expensive clothes at the mall boutiques. After further argument, they effect a final reconciliation and buy more sushi for the anniversary party, which is now definitely on.

● Can this possibly be Woody Allen, toting a surfboard, sprouting the beginnings of a pony tail, gathering expensive packages as he tours the boutiques of the Beverly Center mall? To be sure, sports lawyer Nick Fifer is nervous and garrulous in the old Allen manner, though Paul Mazursky and Roger L. Simon's script is specifically designed to play off against audience expectations. Contemplating that evening's dinner party, Nick proposes sticking his fingers in the eyes of a guest if he compares Los Angeles unfavourably with New York. Such lines may work in the short term as in-jokes, but they hardly help Nick's character – your average, neurotic Los Angeles professional – to take root in the mind.

Bette Midler appears equally adrift. The actress' forceful energy demands that she rampage on screen in larger-than-life settings; Mazursky ties her down with a bland script full of intimate talk in a Californian shopping mall only marginally ritzier than usual. For the film to work, we need to believe in the characters' problems: but Nick and Deborah's revelations, tantrums and reconciliations seem just passing whims – moods to be indulged as they stagger round sampling the consumerist paradise's boutiques, cinemas, sushi bars, cafés and self-styled Maison du Caviar.

Mazursky may have set up the mall environment with the object of satirising a pampered life style – already gently pilloried in early scenes by the couple's matching beepers, portable phones and frivolous angst. But as these wafer-thin people weave their way through shop upon shop of shiny artefacts, basking in a richly dappled texture of artificial light, the film gradually turns into an unadorned hymn to serious shopping.

We long for Nick and Deborah to leave this claustrophobic hell and return home, where at least there had been the mildly diverting spectacle of the lustful Nick struggling to undress Deborah while she talked to a client on the phone. We long for other characters to butt into their constantly circling, shallow talk. All Mazursky provides for variety is a whimsical white-faced mime, regarded by Nick with understandable loathing.

Geoff Brown

Sibling Rivalry

Certificate
15
Distributor
First Independent
Production Company
Castle Rock
Entertainment
In association with
Nelson Entertainment
Executive Producers
George Shapiro
Howard West
Producers
David Lester
Don Miller
Liz Glotzer
Production Associate
Catherine Schellhorn
Production Co-ordinator
Luba Dmytryk
Production Manager
David Lester
Location Manager
Lisa White
Casting
Marci Liroff
Atmosphere:
Ken Post/Cenex
Casting
Nancy Hayes Casting
Assistant Directors
Marty Ewing
James Dillon
Jean V. Isabeau
Robert Mooney
Screenplay
Martha Goldhirsh
Director of Photography
Reynaldo Villalobos
In colour
Camera Operators
Ray de la Motte
Steve Smith
Steadicam Operators
Greg Lundsgaard
Jeff Mart
Editor
Bud Molin
Production Designer
Jeannine C. Oppewall
Art Department Co-ordinator
Tori Nourafchan
Lead Set Design
Steve Wolff
Set Design
Harold Fuhrman
Beverli Eagan
Set Decorator
Lisa Fischer
Set Dressers
Robert Gray
Matt Furginson
Irwin "Eppy" Epstein
Special Effects
Frank "Paco" Munoz
Music
Jack Elliott
Music Extract
"Bach Gm Fugue"
arranged by Mike Marshall, performed by Modern Madolin Quartet

Music Supervisors
Peter Afterman
Diane DeLouise
Wessel
Music Editor
Dan Garde
Music Project Manager
Dawn Soler
Songs
"Honky Tonk Man" by Johnny Horton, Howard Harvey, Tillman Franks, performed by Dwight Yoakam; "If I Were the Man You Wanted" by and performed by Lyle Lovett; "Warm Love" by and performed by Joan Armatrading; "Just a Little Lovin'" by Barry Mann, Cynthia Weil, performed by Estelle Reiner
Costume Design:
Durinda Wood
Supervisor:
Sharon Sampson
Costumers
Set:
Mandy Chamberlin (Key)
Deanne Sellner
Additional:
Christine Zamiera
Carol Kunz
Arlene Encell
Key Make-up Artist
Todd McIntosh
Make-up Artist
Gerald Quist
Special Make-up Effects
KNB EFX Group
Robert Kurtzman
Greg Nicotero
Howard Berger
Title Design
Wayne Fitzgerald
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editors
Kay Rose
Victoria Sampson
Sound Editors
Jerelyn Harding
Carl Mahakian
John Arrufat
William Carruth
Virginia Cook
Linda Folk
Jeff Rosen
Mary Ruth Smith
Jeff Watts
Sound Recordists
Richard Goodman
Music:
Hank Cicalo
Foley Recordists
Carolyn Tapp
James Ashwill
Sound Re-recordists
Donald O. Mitchell
Rick Kline
Robert Beemer
Foley Artists
Kevin Bartnof
Hilda Hodges
Production Assistants
Traci Lashbrook
Julie Dubic
Berta Segall
Sara Terrien
Anne Wilson
Catherine Isakson
Set:
Nicolas Spikings
Stunt Co-ordinator
Jerry Gatlin
Stand-ins
Maria Rosakos
Tim McCormick
Ted Haggarty

Cast
Kirstie Alley
Marjorie Turner
Bill Pullman
Nicholas Meany
Carrie Fisher
Iris Turner-Hunter
Jami Gertz
Jeanine
Scott Bakula
Harry Turner
Frances Sternhagen
Rose Turner
John Randolph
Charles Turner Snr
Sam Elliott
Charles Turner Jnr
Ed O'Neill
Wilbur Meany
Paul Benedict
Doctor Plotner
Bill Macy
Pat
Matthew Laurance
Dr Casey Hunter
Ron Orbach
Don, Desk Clerk
Edward Escobar
911 Officer
Greg Collins
Hotel Security Guard
Patrick Cronin
Gary Diamond
Dian Kobayashi
Market Cashier
Teddy Haggarty
Roger, Salesman
Roy Van Swearingen
Mayor
Ken Grantham
Minister
Dan Sachoff
Doorman
Sean Ching
Delivery Man
Bob Harks
Priest
Adele Proom
Hostess
Heather Marie Wierman
Patient
Maurine Houck
Aunt Rose
Crystan Leas
Young Marjorie
Yvonne De Barca
Young Jeanine

7,885 feet
88 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Carl Reiner

● Marjorie Turner, unfulfilled in her marriage to Harry Turner – the most put-upon in a family of snobbish doctors – is advised by her free-living sister Jeanine to have an affair to loosen her up. Meeting a man in a supermarket, and helping him to write a note for a fruit basket he is sending to a party he does not want to attend, she checks into a hotel with him. During energetic sex, however, he dies of a heart attack.

Marjorie flees the scene, allowing Nick Meany – a struggling, ne'er-do-well vertical blind salesman – to enter the room and put up blinds he hopes will impress the hotel management into making a bulk order and saving his job. Nick drops a blind on the corpse and, believing he is responsible for his death, gets in touch with Marjorie (who has left her



wallet behind) to apologise for killing her 'husband'. Marjorie has made an anonymous call to the police – which they have traced – to report the death, and she is called away by Nick from a dinner party the Turners are holding to welcome back from abroad their other son, Charles.

When his fruit basket arrives instead, Marjorie realises that the dead man is her brother-in-law. Marjorie and Nick try to pass the death off as suicide, while Nick's policeman brother Wilbur, whose promotion prospects depend on keeping Nick out of trouble, investigates the call about the hotel death. He meets Jeanine and they fall in love. Harry, who has never been able to live up to his family's expectations thanks to Charles' glorious career, investigates the death and suspects murder.

Nick gives himself up for manslaughter and Jeanine, in order

to help Wilbur, prods Marjorie into blurting out the whole story to the Turners. Harry leaves and Marjorie finds herself by becoming a writer, while Nick makes his bulk sale and Wilbur and Jeanine get together. Finally, now free from his brother's shadow and more relaxed, Harry returns and is reconciled with Marjorie.

From its jingly opening theme through its glossy sit-com setting and contrived farce situations, *Sibling Rivalry* fits less with the broad and sentimental knockabout of previous Kirstie Alley vehicles than with the late 60s/early 70s wackiness that includes such farces of infidelity, death and floppy hats as *The Secret Life of an American Wife*, *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* and *Such Good Friends*. While this makes it a much more ambitious and ingratiating stab at black humour

than the food-fight level of contemporary screen comedy, the movie still stubbornly fails to work as well as it should, because only half the cast are really on their best behaviour.

Alley, relying on her patented exasperation and uptight mannerisms, is too often partnered with a disastrously twitchy and Jerry Lewis-like Bill Pullman. The sole calm, non-stressful relationship in the movie is between Jami Gertz, who is excellent as the unambitious, fish-loving younger sister, and Ed O'Neill, as the cop who just seems to be in the film to keep up the parallel sets of older/younger, achiever/loser, relaxed/stressed siblings without having any effective character of his own.

The funniest performances are actually rather minor, with Sam Elliott doing marvels as the corpse, believable as someone attractive

Like Sylvia Plath, only happy: Kirstie Alley

enough to get Alley into bed on a first meeting, old enough to drop dead from a heart attack, and self-possessed enough to suggest the cruel cool that has driven Harry to insignificant wormhood by excessive example. Frances Sternhagen, John Randolph and Carrie Fisher are perfect as Marjorie's sneery in-laws, pressing her into a life of "functional catatonia" whereas she would have preferred to have been a writer, "just like Sylvia Plath, only happy". And Carl Reiner also has to be credited with some isolated moments of perfect character pitching, as when Marjorie solicits praise from the grieving and intimidating parents-in-law who have ignored her throughout her marriage by asking if they really admire Charles' suicide note, which she wrote.

Kim Newman

The Silence of the Lambs

Certificate
18
Distributor
Rank
Production Companies
Orion Pictures
A Strong Heart/
Demme production
Executive Producer
Gary Goetzman
Producers
Edward Saxon
Kenneth Utt
Ron Bozman
Associate Producer
Grace Blake
Unit Production Manager
Kenneth Utt
Location
Co-ordinators
Washington DC:
John Crowder
Bahamas:
Gus Holzer
Location Managers
Neri Kyle
Tannenbaum
Annie Loeffler
Mike McCue
Post-Production Supervisor
Marshall Persinger
Casting
Howard Feuer
Pittsburgh:
Donna Belajac
Extras:
Staci Blagovich
Virginia Extras:
The Erickson Agency
Assistant Directors
Ron Bozman
Kyle McCarthy
Steve Rose
Gina Leonetti
Screenplay
Ted Tally
Based on the novel by
Thomas Harris
Director of Photography
Tak Fujimoto
Panavision
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operator
Tony Jannelli
Steadicam Operator
Larry McConkey
Editor
Craig McKay
Associate Editor
Lisa Bromwell
Production Designer
Kristi Zea
Art Director
Tim Galvin
Set Decorator
Karen O'Hara
Set Dressers
Ken Turek
Ed Lohrer III
Edward West
Art Department Co-ordinator
Francine Byrne
Scenic Artists
Master:
Eileen Garrigan
Key:
Frederika Gray
Storyboard Artists
Kalina Ivanov
Kare Shefelman
Special Effects
Dwight
Benjamin-Creel
Music
Howard Shore
Music Extract
Goldberg Variations
by J. S. Bach,
performed by Jerry
Zimmerman
Orchestrations
Homer Denison
Music Supervisor
Sharon Boyle
Music Editor
Suzana Peric
Songs
"American Girl" by
T. Petty, performed by
Tom Petty and the
Heartbreakers;
"Sunny Day" by

T. Ottaviano,
performed by Book of
Love; "Hip Priest" by
M. E. Smith, M. Riley,
S. Hanley, C. Scanlon,
P. Hanley, performed
by The Fall; "Alone"
by C. Newman,
G. Lewis, performed
by Colin Newman;
"Real Men" by
B. Licher, M. Erskine,
J. Long, performed by
Savage Republic;
"Goodbye Horses" by
W. Garvey, performed
by Q. Lazzarus;
"Lanmo Nan Zile A"
by and performed by
Les Frères Parent
Costume Design
Colleen Atwood
Wardrobe Supervisors
Mark Burchard
Hartsell Taylor
Make-Up Created by
Allen Weisinger
Special Make-Up Effects Created by
Carl Fullerton
Neal Martz
Titles/Opticals
R/Greenberg
Associates
Sound Design
Skip Lievsay
Dialogue Editors
Fred Rosenberg
Jeffrey Stern
Marissa Littlefield
Phil Stockton
ADR Editor
Gail Showalter
Deborah Wallach
Foley Editors
Bruce Pross
Frank Kern
Steven Visscher
Sound Recordists
Christopher Newman
John Fundus
Music:
Alan Snelling
ADR Recordist
David Boulton
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-Recordist
Tom Fleischman
Douglas L. Murray
Sean Squires
Sound Effects Editor
Ron Bochar
Foley Artist
Mark Costanzo
Entomological Consultants
John E. Rawlins
Sally Love
Police Consultant
Walter "O.J." Oggier
Production Assistants
Maria Mason
Gina White
Becky Gibbs
Iane Ulan
Monica Bielawski
Andre Blake
Ben Ramsey
"Buz" Wasler
Hyle White
Paula Oliver
Teri Hanson
Jeffrey Barabe
Stunt Co-ordinator
John Robotham
Stunts
Walt Robles
George Wilbur
Mike Cassidy
Moth Wrangler/Stylist
Raymond A. Mendez
Dog Trainer
Christie Miele
Cast
Jodie Foster
Clarice Starling
Anthony Hopkins
Dr Hannibal Lecter
Scott Glenn
Jack Crawford

Ted Levine
Jame Gumb
Anthony Heald
Dr Frederick Chilton
Lawrence A. Bonney
FBI Instructor
Kasi Lemmons
Ardelia Mapp
Lawrence T. Wrentz
Agent Burroughs
Frankie Faison
Barney
Don Brockett
Friendly Psychopath
Frank Seals Jr
Brooding Psychopath
Stuart Rudin
Miggs
Masha Skorobogatov
Young Clarice
Jeffrie Lane
Clarice's Father
Leib Lensky
Mr Lang
Red Schwartz
Mr Lang's Driver
Jim Roche
TV Evangelist
Brooke Smith
Catherine Martin
James B. Howard
Boxing Instructor
Bill Miller
Mr Brigham
Chuck Aber
Agent Terry
Gene Borkan
Oscar
Pat McNamara
Sheriff Perkins
Tracey Walter
Lamar
Kenneth Utt
Dr Akin
Dan Butler
Roden
Paul Lazar
Pilcher
"Darla"
"Precious"
Adelle Lutz
TV Anchorwoman
Obba Babatundé
TV Anchorman
George Michael
TV Sportscaster
Diane Baker
Senator Ruth Martin
Roger Corman
FBI Director Hayden
Burke
Ron Vawter
Ron Krendler
Charles Napier
Lieutenant Boyle
Jim Dratfield
Senator Martin's Aide
Stanton-Miranda
Rebecca Saxon
Reporters
Danny Darst
Sergeant Tate
Cynthia Ettinger
Officer Jacobs
Brent Hinkley
Officer Murray
Steve Wyatt
Airport Flirt
Alex Coleman
Sergeant Pembry
David Early
Spooked Memphis
Cop
André Blake
Tall Memphis Cop
Bill Dalzell III
Distracted Memphis
Cop
Chris Isaak
SWAT Commander
Daniel von Barga
SWAT Communicator
Tommy LaFitte
SWAT Shooter
Josh Broder
EMS Attendant
Buzz Kilman
EMS Driver
Harry Northup
Mr Bimmel
Lauren Roselli
Stacy Hubka
Lamont Arnold
Flower Delivery Man

10,654 feet
118 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Jonathan Demme

Washington, DC. Clarice Starling, a gifted student at the FBI Academy, is temporarily assigned to Behavioural Science to help agent Jack Crawford on the case of "Buffalo Bill", a serial killer who skins the bodies of his young female victims. Crawford sends Starling to interview Dr Hannibal "the Cannibal" Lecter, a once eminent psychiatrist turned serial killer, now confined in the Baltimore Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Warned by Crawford and hospital head Dr Frederick Chilton to keep her distance from the evil Lecter, Starling is nevertheless fascinated by the acuity with which he probes into her unhappy childhood. Lecter makes a cryptic remark which leads Starling to discover a severed head belonging to the lover of one Benjamin Raspail, a transvestite former patient of Lecter's whom he suggests is linked to Buffalo Bill.

Meanwhile, in Memphis, Catherine Martin, daughter of Senator Ruth Martin, is taken captive by Buffalo Bill and imprisoned in a well in his cellar. Starling and Crawford fly to Clay County, West Virginia, to examine the body of a recent victim, and find a bug in the dead girl's throat which is later identified as a rare death's-head moth. Starling returns to Lecter with a deal, which she falsely claims has Ruth Martin's backing, offering him special privileges in return for his help. However, Chilton makes his own deal with Lecter, genuinely backed by Senator Martin. After giving the senator misleading information in Memphis, the heavily bound Lecter is locked in a specially built cage, where Starling visits him.

He hints that the killer knew his first victim, a young seamstress

called Frederica, well. Later, Lecter escapes after savagely killing and mutilating his guards. Starling visits Frederica's home in Belvedere, Ohio. She realises that the killer is a tailor who skins the bodies to make a suit for himself. Meanwhile, the death's-head moth leads Crawford to Chicago resident Jame Gumb, and he flies there, instructing Starling to collect more evidence in Belvedere. She tracks down the address of Frederica's employer, Mrs Lippman, but finds that a man now lives there. Spotting a death's-head moth, Starling realises he is Gumb, and pulls her gun, but he escapes to his cellar.

Following him, Starling finds Catherine and tries to stalk Jame in the darkness, unaware that he is watching her through photographic goggles. Unable to see him, she manages to save herself by shooting at the sound of his gun clicking. In Chicago, Crawford and his team, discovering that Gumb has gone, race to Belvedere. Subsequently, at Starling's graduation ceremony, she receives a farewell call from Lecter, now living in Haiti.

"Hurt/Agony/Pain/Love it or die": the sign on the FBI Academy assault course is the cue for Jonathan Demme's omen for the millennium. He and scriptwriter Ted Tally have neatly filleted Thomas Harris' virtuoso novel to produce a sombre masterpiece, the dark flip-side of the brash *Married to the Mob*, in which an FBI agent falls in love with the woman he is surveying. From the opening shots, as a dull, grey mist dusts the trees at dawn, to the final scene showing Hannibal Lecter ambling after fresh prey at dusk, the film creates a world drained of light, counterpointed by a sinister and unsettling score. The heavy, unnatural crimson of Lecter's



Renaissance man preserved: Anthony Hopkins, Jodie Foster



Psyche centred: Jodie Foster

subterranean prison, or the green of Buffalo Bill's goggles casting their strange hue over his chamber of horrors, recall the Gothic style of Roger Corman's Poe cycle. And what could be more appropriate to this story of teacher-protégé relationships than a cameo appearance by Demme's own mentor, the director of the apocalyptic *The Man with the X-Ray Eyes*, here playing the Head of the FBI?

Demme has a knack for characterisation that serves this anatomy of a murderer well. Serial killers Buffalo Bill, who skins his victims, and Hannibal "the Cannibal" Lecter, who devours his, make a gruesome double act, but the latter gets the best lines. The phenomenal Lecter, played with steely-eyed relish by Anthony Hopkins, is renaissance man turned mediaeval gargoyle. He draws the Duomo at Florence from memory, can distinguish which version of the *Goldberg Variations* he prefers, is expert in the art of grisly cuisine: at Hannibal's feast, the old *roué* is likely to serve up human liver with fava beans and chianti. A reincarnation of Dracula, he personifies a self-devouring high culture turning in on its own impeccable order. More chillingly, as a high priest of the twentieth-century religion, psychoanalysis, he is diabolical indeed.

But a woman's psyche takes centre

stage. Rookie FBI agent Clarice Starling, investigating the violation and death of a series of young women like herself, must confront her own vulnerability and childhood fears. Demme avoids exploiting potentially sensational material, focusing on Starling's emotional and psychological journey through a shocking and traumatic landscape. A post-mortem sequence, for example, in which she has to examine in detail the bloated and mutilated corpse of one of Buffalo Bill's victims, scrutinises her expression, registering the difficulty with which she controls her feelings. And on her visit to the faded bedroom of another victim, Frederica, looking for the deceased girl's small secrets, she finds hidden in a child's music box polaroids of her gauchly posing in her underwear, little knowing that she is being sized up for a more terrifying need. The scene is poignant, mourning the loss of an innocent young woman, but also painful, reminding Starling of her own uneasy status as a coveted object.

Foster is remarkable in the role of the fledgling agent: a backwoods girl from West Virginia, disadvantaged by virtue of her class and sex, striving for equality in the FBI male hierarchy. Her strength and determination are evident from the very beginning as she bombs along

the assault course, pushing herself to the limits. As the protégée of dour agent Crawford, she becomes an exceptional case, the centre of a curious attention. The film highlights the problems attendant on her temporary promotion: in a lift, she appears conspicuously small next to her burly male colleagues, getting second looks from passers-by; accompanying Crawford to the post-mortem, she stands her ground against a posse of deputies who cast a resentful eye over her. But above all, she is the object of Lecter's laser-like stare, which may leave her flesh unsullied, but seeks to gouge out her soul.

This invasion of her innermost thoughts and the very space she inhabits is chillingly resonant in Lecter brushing her fingers from behind the bars of his cage, in Buffalo Bill reaching out to possess her in the dark, or even in Crawford's farewell handshake. To collect her evidence, Starling puts her very self at risk, venturing into America's secret darkness, from Lecter's hellish dungeon, where all the sins of repression threaten to erupt, to Buffalo Bill's underground cavern, where a neo-fascist poster exhorts "America Open Your Eyes". Here, most disturbingly, Demme invites the audience to crawl under the killer's skin, illuminating Starling with the festering green spotlight of

Buffalo Bill's envious gaze.

As in Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*, the cinema audience is implicated with a deadly look (blatantly that of a controlling, repressive and vigilant order) which pins down its victim. This shift of identification away from feisty heroine to obsessive killer pushes the spectator to the edge of his/her own abyss. "Believe me, you don't want Hannibal Lecter inside your head", Starling is warned. But Lecter is a consummate professional, teasing home truths out of her and easing himself into her mind in a sado-masochistic duel. "People will say we're in love" he quips, and perhaps he is. "The world is a more interesting place with you in it", he confesses in a swan-song to his Starling from his Haitian hideaway.

Meanwhile, Buffalo Bill, his own genitals neatly tucked away, wants to occupy and penetrate women's bodies. He sews, Dr Frankenstein-style, a sheath made out of their skins to dress up in, as if to stamp out female sexuality completely in an anarchic quest for identity. Are these the laws of desire in a decaying culture built on the husks of atrophied ideals, where longing is a destructive touch and relationships are made out of perverse torment? It's a grim message: Hurt, agony, pain; love it or die.

Lizzie Francke

Certificate
18
Distributor
Rank
Production Company
Cinehaus
An Orion Pictures release
Producers
Ned Dowd
Randy Ostrow
Ron Rotholz
Supervising Production Co-ordinator
Judith Lyn Brown
Production Co-ordinator
Michael Boonstra
Unit Production Manager
Michael Hausman
Production Manager
Randy Ostrow
Location Manager
Donna Bloom
Post-production Supervisor
Heidi Vogel
Casting
Bonnie Timmermann
Extras:
Karen Etcoff
Kee Casting
Assistant Directors
Thomas Mack
Liz Ryan
Marge Sperling
Screenplay
Dennis McIntyre
Director of Photography
Jordan Cronenweth
Panavision
In colour
Prints by Deluxe
2nd Unit Photography
Richard J. Quinlan
Camera Operator
Michael Stone
Steadicam Operator
Larry Huston
Editor
Claire Simpson
Associate Editor
Judy Silberstein
Production Designers
Patrizia Von Brandenstein
Doug Kraner
Supervising Art Director
Timothy Galvin
Art Director
Shawn Hausman
Set Decorator
George DeTitta
Set Dressers
Steve Krieger
Christopher S. Nelson
Chris DeTitta
Donald Holtzman
Damian Costa
Robert D. Wilson Jnr
William Bishop Jnr
Michael A. Saccio
Arthur Von Blomberg
Draughtswoman
Fredda Slavin
Master Storyboard Artist
Jon Ringbom
Storyboard Artists
Eva P. Davy
June DeCamp
Joseph Forbes
Special Effects
Al Griswold
William Traynor
Music/Music Director
Ennio Morricone
Music Extracts
Swan Lake by Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky, performed by The 101 Strings Orchestra
Music Performed by
Unione Musicisti di Roma
Music Co-ordinator
Enrico de Melis
Orchestrations
Ennio Morricone
Music Editor
Robert Randles

Songs
"White City" by Shane MacGowan, performed by The Pogues; "Ways to Be Wicked" performed by Lone Justice; "Trip through Your Wires" performed by U2; "Drink Before the War" by and performed by Sinead O'Connor; "Vete Mujer" performed by Orquesta Immensidad; "I Gave My Wedding Dress Away" by Hy Heath. Fred Rose, performed by Eileen Reed and the Cadets; "Moondance" performed by Van Morrison; "Sweet Child O' Mine" by Slash, W. Axl Rose, Steven Adler, Izzy Stradlin, Duff McKagan, performed by Guns N' Roses; "Street Fighting Man" by Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, performed by The Rolling Stones; "I Loved You Yesterday" by and performed by Lyle Lovett
Costume Design
Ande Bronson-Howard
Wardrobe Supervisors
Men:
Mark Burchard
Women:
Susan J. Wright
Make-up/Special Make-up Effects
Bob Laden
Titles
Pacific Title
Opticals
R/Greenberg Associates
Title Consultant
Glenn Lazzaro
Supervising Sound Editors
Doby Dorn
Blake Leyh
Sound Editors
Robert Hein
Hal Levinsohn
Stuart Stanley
Michael Steinfeld
Clare Freeman
ADR Editor
Harriet Fildow Winn
Music Sound Recordist
Sergio Marcotulli
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Mark Berger
David Parker
Foley Artist
Elisha Birnbaum
Technical Adviser
Detective Tommy Sullivan
Production Assistants
Carol Bawer
Chanan Beizer
Paul Bernard
Paul Bode
Kimberly Von Brandenstein
Anthony D'Esposito
Ged Dickersin
Paula Dominguez
Scott Ferguson
John Gallagher
Renee Gallo
Timothy Lee
Rebecca Morton
Osceola Refetoff
Gerard Sava
Ellie Smith
Bryan Subotnick
Douglas Tirola

Stunt Co-ordinator
Jery Hewitt
Stunts
Danny Aiello III
Bill Anagnos
Paul Bucossi
Peter Bucossi
Carl Ciarfalio
John Cenatiempo
Daniel Dod
Norman Douglass
Roy Farfel
Nicholas J. Giangulio
Jery Hewitt
Michael Mirkin
Joseph A. Mottile
Jeff Ward
Stand-ins
Shane Kerwin
James Coyle
Steve Ayle
Martha Karlsson
Cast
Sean Penn
Terry Noonan
Ed Harris
Frankie Flannery
Gary Oldman
Jackie Flannery
Robin Wright
Kathleen Flannery
John Turturro
Nick
John C. Reilly
Stevie
R.D. Call
Nicholson
Joe Vitorelli
Borelli
Burgess Meredith
Finn
Dierdre O'Connell
Irene
Marco St. John
Don Cavello
Thomas G. Waites
Brian Burke
Michael Cumpsty
Michael Cunningham
Daniel O'Shea
Thomas F. Duffy
Frankie's Men
Jaime Tirelli
Alvarez
Sandra Beall
Stevie's Date
Vincent Guastaferra
John Anthony Williams
John Roselius
Louis Eppolito
Borelli's Men
Mo Gaffney
Maureen
John MacKay
Raferty
John Ottavino
Raferty's Son
Tim Gallin
Timothy D. Klein
Bar Customers
Jack Wallace
Matty's Bartender
Frank Girardeau
Michael P. Moran
Frank Coletta
Bartenders
Paul-Felix Montez
Pool Hall Manager
Freddie Chandler
Waitress
Tommy Sullivan
Police Detective
Ben Fine
Hotel Doorman
Sasha Costello
Catherine Stewart
Frankie's Children
12,057 feet
134 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Phil Joanou

After many years, Terry Noonan returns to the Hell's Kitchen neighbourhood in New York where he grew up. There he finds his childhood friend Jackie Flannery, and his first love, Jackie's sister Kathleen. Jackie is a foot soldier in the local Irish mob, of which his brother Frankie is the boss. Having established his own criminal credentials, Terry joins the gang in acts of arson and extortion, and also resumes his affair with the respectable Kathleen. Another childhood friend, Stevie, is in debt to Italian gangsters. Jackie and Terry run off a couple of mafiosi sent to collect from him, but this only upsets Don Cavello, who is negotiating an alliance with Frankie.

In deference to the don, and his own business interests, Frankie murders Stevie. Jackie immediately swears revenge on the Italians, but his brother forbids him to act. It transpires that Terry is a Boston cop, who has gone undercover to break the Irish mob before they can join forces with the Mafia. He hears a rumour that Frankie murdered Stevie, but Jackie will not listen to him, and instead takes it upon himself to shoot down Cavello and his bodyguards. Outraged, and fearful of a gang war, Frankie meets with another Mafia boss, Borelli, while weighing whether to placate him or launch a pre-emptive attack.

The Italian's insistence on ceremony almost takes the decision out of his hands, as he is unable to call off his precautionary assault, but Terry's time-wasting tactics avert the massacre. Frankie sees that he must sacrifice his brother to safeguard himself. Terry fails to provide proper cover for Jackie on a pick-up that night, and the latter is murdered by Frankie. At the funeral, rejected by Kathleen and ridden with guilt, Terry presents Frankie with his police badge. Later, during the St Patrick's

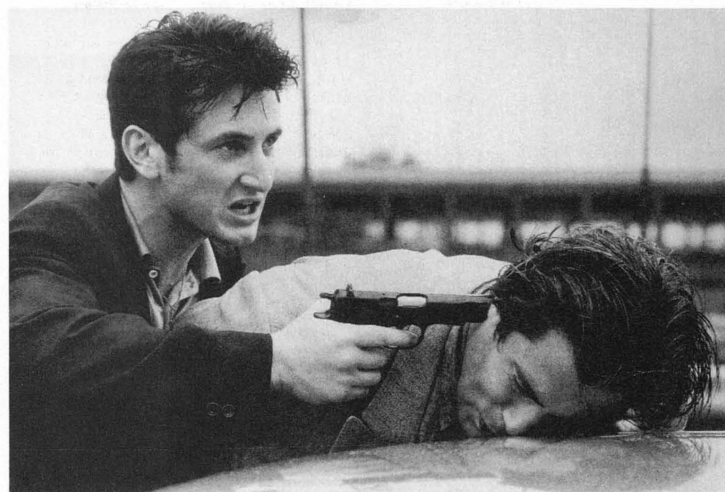
Day parade, Terry walks into a private bar, and in the subsequent shoot-out kills Frankie and his henchmen, but is seriously wounded himself.

Loosely inspired by the activities of the notorious New York Irish criminals, the Westies, *State of Grace* is something of a hybrid. Spielberg protégé Phil Joanou, best known for *U2: Rattle and Hum*, strains to accommodate the rigorous moral interrogation of a Sidney Lumet precinct drama within the extravagant rhetoric of the gangster film. Such definition as the film has springs from the Hell's Kitchen district in which it is set. Loyalty is founded on the clanship of the neighbourhood; but ambition, for respectability, or money, necessitates quitting the neighbourhood and, crucially, cutting emotional ties. Frankie quite callously murders his own occasional henchman, Stevie, to smooth his relations with the Mafia.

But Terry is equally calculating, playing on former friendships to infiltrate the gang. The extent of their mutual guilt is exposed in relation to Jackie, who remains fatally true to his roots. It is Jackie who comes closest to the traditional movie gangster/tragic hero, in the process upsetting the film's dramatic balance because he is more intensely alive than the central protagonists.

Throughout *State of Grace* there is regret for the old neighbourhood (and old gangsters?), but like its protagonists the film feels up-rooted and emotionally detached. Significantly, Joanou's references are all comparatively modern: Terry and Jackie recall Charlie and Johnny Boy in *Mean Streets*, while Frankie must be related to Michael Corleone. But there is little resonance in this, nor much sign of Joanou himself, except, perhaps, in a line of grim humour that includes Jackie producing a pair of disembodied hands from his freezer.

Tom Charity



Clanship: Sean Penn

White Fang

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Hybrid Productions
For Walt Disney
In association with
Silver Screen
Partners IV
Executive Producers
Mike Lobell
Andrew Bergman
Producer
Mary Kay Powell
Production Supervisor
2nd Unit:
Victoria Westhead
Production Co-ordinator
Jeannine Jeha
Production Managers
Robert Schneider
Richard H. Prince
Location Managers
Thomas A. Andriesen
Raine Hall
Stuart Neumann
2nd Unit Director
Gary Capo
Casting
Michael Fenton
Judy Taylor
Valerie Massalas
Extras:
Beth MacCready
Assistant Directors
Doug Metzger
Linda Brachman
2nd Unit:
Bruce Moriarty
Seth Cirker
Screenplay
Jeanne Rosenberg
Nick Thiel
David Fallon
Based on the novel by
Jack London
Director of Photography
Tony Pierce-Roberts
Colour
Eastman Colour
Prints by Technicolor
2nd Unit Photography
Gary Capo
Matte Photography
Eric Peterson
Camera Operators
Michael Levine
Michael A. Benson
Tony Pierce-Roberts
Steadicam Operator
Rick Raphael
Visual Effects Consultant
Thomas G. Smith
Matte Artist
Paul Lasaine
Editor
Lisa Day
Associate Editor
Harry Hitner
Production Designer
Michael Bolton
Art Director
Sandy Cochrane
Set Decorator
Brian Kasch

Special Effects Foremen
John Thomas
Mike Vezina
Special Effects
Tod Sebens
Animal Makers
Jim Boulden
Debi Boulden
Music
Basil Poledouris
Additional:
Fiachra Trench
Orchestrations
Greg McRitchie
Fiachra Trench
Shirley Walker
Music Production Supervisor
Maggie Rodford
Supervising Music Editor
Charles Martin Inouye
Music Editors
Segue Music
Song
"The Bear" by Shirley Walker
Costume Design
Jenny Beavan
John Bright
Wardrobe Supervisors
Patrick Dorman
Sally Roberts
Make-up Artist
GiGi Coker
Title Design
Penelope Gottlieb
Titles/Opticals
Buena Vista Visual Effects
Sound Design/Supervising Sound Editor
Dessie Markovsky
Sound Editors
Frederick Stafford
William Hooper
Craig Yaeger
Simon Coke
Michael Hoskinson
Julie Feiner
Olof Kallstrom
Brigitte Daloin
Oswald
Brent Winter
Marc Deschaine
ADR Editors
Burton Sharp
Additional:
Norman B. Schwartz
Sound Recordists
David Nelson
Music:
Tim Boyle
Steve Prince
Paul Hulme
Dolby stereo
ADR Voice Group
E. J. Castillo
Jean Gilpin
Frederick Hoffman
Roger Kern
Walter Maslow
Patricia Parris
Mike L. Reynolds
Stefanie Ryan
Burton Sharp
Thomas Lee Tully
Sound Re-recordists
William MacCaughey
T.A. Moore Jnr
Don MacDougall
Foley Artists
Ed Steidele
Ross Taylor
Production Assistants
Set:
Sean Kavanagh
2nd Unit:
Fuzzy von Stauffenberg
Stunt Co-ordinator
Rick Barker
Stunts
Rick Barker
Cliff McLaughlin
Doug Metzger
Clint Rowe
Doug Seus
Clint B. Younggreen

Animal Behaviour Co-ordinator
Clint Rowe's Animals
Lead Animal/White Fang Trainer
Clint Rowe
Animal Trainers
Clint B. Younggreen
Lynne Seus
Scott Rowe
John Simpson
Tim Ahrend
Lalanea Rowe
Jackie Martin
Stacey Packer
Bart the Bear:
Doug Seus' Wasatch
Rocky Mountain Wildlife
Sled Dogs:
Joe Henderson
Denise Berni
Wranglers
Rusty Hendrickson
André Cerina
John Scott
Charles Hughes
Bob House
Tom Erickson
Ken Carpenter
Wolf Pack/Behaviours
Doug Seus' Wasatch
Rocky Mountain Wildlife
Hybrid Pack
Wild Bunch
Cubs:
Pamela Kook Buttler

Cast
Klaus Maria Brandauer
Alex Larson
Ethan Hawke
Jack Conroy
Seymour Cassel
Skunker
Susan Hogan
Belinda
James Remar
Beauty Smith
Bill Moseley
Luke
Clint B. Younggreen
Tinker
Pius Savage
Grey Beaver
Aaron Hotch
Little Beaver
Charles Jimmie Snr
Older Indian
Clifford Fossman
Irvin Sogge
Old Timers
Tom Fallon
Prospector
Dick Mackey
Sled Dog Prospector
Suzanne Kent
Heather
Robert G. Hoelen
Bar Patron
George Rogers
Registrar
Michael David Lally
Sykes
Raymond R. Menaker
Shopkeeper
David Fallon
Lookout
Michael A. Hagen
Teenager
Diane Benson
Grey Beaver's Wife
Rob Kyker
Tom Yewell
Frozen Prospectors
John Beers
Sykese Dog Handler
Van Clifton
Piano Player
Jim Moore
Violin Player
Marliese Schneider
Woman of the Night
Bart the Bear
Bear

9,781 feet
109 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Randal Kleiser

Orphaned youngster Jack Conroy arrives in the Klondike in 1898 to take over his late father's gold-mining claim, and is almost immediately robbed by the villainous Beauty Smith. Jack asks Yukon guide Alex Larson to take him to his father's claim, and the latter reluctantly allows the youth to accompany him while he transports a coffin back to the occupant's chosen resting place. When the coffin careers down a hill and into a frozen lake, Jack goes after it and only escapes drowning by using the corpse as a kind of life raft. That night, Alex and Jack's camp is surrounded by wolves, which they drive off with the help of some passing strangers. One of the animals, half-wolf and half-dog, dies on reaching its offspring, and the pup wanders off to be caught in the trap of an Indian, Grey Beaver.

Jack and Alex finally bury the corpse and visit Alex's fiancée Belinda, after which Alex agrees to lead Jack to his father's claim. They set off by canoe and along the way stop at Grey Beaver's camp, where they are introduced to the now fully grown animal, part-wolf, part-dog, which he calls White Fang. Jack feels an immediate affection for the animal, which White Fang reciprocates by saving him from a huge bear. But after Alex and Jack leave for the old mining cabin of Jack's father, Beauty Smith acquires White Fang as a fighting dog, and after winning several bouts he is severely mauled. He is rescued by Jack, who divides his time between nursing him back to health and mining for gold.

Jack is almost killed in a tunnel collapse, but gold dust on White Fang's coat reveals that the pair have struck it rich. The news draws the attention of Beauty Smith and two cronies, who set fire to the cabin and attempt to kill Alex and Jack, but

White Fang is instrumental in seeing them off. With his share of the wealth, Alex takes the steamer south to San Francisco with Belinda. But Jack, having with difficulty returned White Fang to the wilderness, changes his mind about going with them, and heads back to his mining claim where White Fang is waiting for him.

Jack London's 1905 novel, upon which this Disney film is loosely based, tells the story of White Fang's very violent adventures from the animal's point of view; a killer adrift in a killer's world. To quote: "Had the cub thought in man fashion, he might have epitomised life as a voracious appetite and the world as a place wherein ranged a multitude of appetites, pursuing and being pursued... all in a blindness and confusion, with violence and disorder, a chaos of gluttony and slaughter, ruled over by chance, merciless, planless, endless". To stay with this perspective in a movie would have been a great challenge, but the makers of *White Fang* have opted instead for an almost completely new storyline in which White Fang is marginalised and turned into just one more anthropomorphic pet.

Significantly, Jack Conroy (who doesn't exist in the book, replacing the mature Weedon Scott character) is a young man with a lot to learn. In his rite-of-passage adventures in the great Alaskan outdoors, with his surrogate father/elder brother Alex Larson, White Fang is reduced to the role of helpful supporting player; the fight scenes are little more than playful romps and nature is presented as a colourful theme park. The locations are frequently spectacular and Basil Poledouris contributes a suitably majestic score, but the subject cries out for the sensibility of a John Milius and a great deal of blood in the snow. Neither is at all in evidence here.

Tom Tunney



Unblooded: Ethan Hawke

Reviews

State of Grace
White Fang

VIDEO

William Green reviews every video released this month

★ Highlights

Reviews in **Monthly Film Bulletin (MFB)** and **Sight and Sound** are cited in parentheses

Rental

Breaking In

Capital CHV1003
1989

Certificate 15 Director Bill Forsyth
★ A John Sayles screenplay about a pair of small-time burglars. Burt Reynolds (in superb form) plays a worldly-wise crook passing on his experience of life and crime to young Casey Siemaszko. The whole thing is delightfully down-played. (MFB No.680)

Bullseye

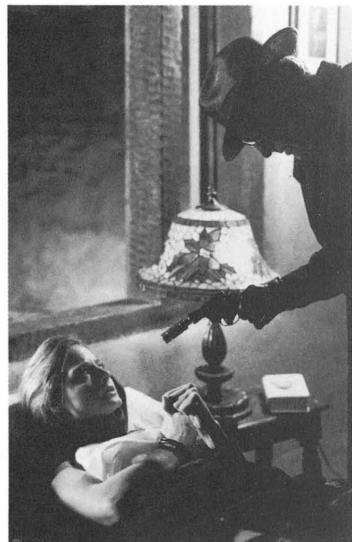
RCA/Columbia CVT12566
1990

Certificate 15 Director Michael Winner
Not known for his subtlety, Winner teams Michael Caine and Roger Moore as a pair of con-men who just happen to resemble two dishonest nuclear fission scientists (Michael Caine and Roger Moore) and sends them on a chase to Scotland. (MFB No.682)

Catchfire

First Independent VA20125
1989

Certificate 15 Director Alan Smithee
★ Dennis Hopper refused a director's credit after the producers took a pair of scissors to his fine cut, but his unmistakable signature is splashed all over the film. Hopper plays a mob hitman who kidnaps and then goes on the run with his contract target (Jodie Foster). Fine cameos litter the gleaming Texan landscape – Dean Stockwell, Vincent Price, Joe Pesci, Fred Ward. (MFB No.685)



'Catchfire': hardly a bedtime story

Come See the Paradise

CBS/Fox 1854
1990

Certificate 15 Director Alan Parker
A weak attempt to play on the shock of an inter-racial marriage between Irish-American Dennis Quaid and a Japanese woman (Tamlyn Tomita). Their soppy love affair is set against the uncertainties following Pearl Harbour and an internment camp for 'aliens' in North Dakota. (MFB No.683)

Criminal Law

RCA/Columbia CVT11636
1989

Certificate 18 Director Martin Campbell
An unconventional hotshot lawyer, Gary Oldman, realises he has won freedom for a heartless yuppie killer (Kevin Bacon). Director Campbell makes the most of a predictable and occasionally gruesome plot. (MFB No.682)

Death Warrant

MGM/UA 52170
1990

Certificate 18 Director Deran Sarafian
Jean-Claude Van Damme in a maelstrom of macho muscle-flexing as he goes undercover in the local state penitentiary to discover who is knocking off the inmates and selling their organs to the transplant trade. (Sight and Sound May 1991)

Delta Force 2

MGM/Pathé 54229
1990

Certificate 18 Director Aaron Norris
Chuck Norris returns as Colonel McCoy, the karate chop commando whose love of unarmed combat does not prevent him toting an arsenal of weapons in his deadly pursuit of an evil drug baron. (Sight and Sound May 1991)

Ghost

CIC VHB2496
1990

Certificate 12 Director Jerry Zucker
★ Jerry Zucker's comedy-romance-thriller is impossible to dislike. Deceased Patrick Swayze can only reach grieving girlfriend Demi Moore through the auspices of a reluctant medium (Whoopi Goldberg). (MFB No.681)

GoodFellas

Warner 12039
1990

Certificate 18 Director Martin Scorsese
★ The ultimate mobster movie, stripped of all the glamour and any pretence at dignity. Joe Pesci, Ray Liotta and Robert De Niro are



'GoodFellas': all in the family

outstanding, and Scorsese's virtuoso camera work and editing techniques mark him out as America's last remaining auteur. (MFB No.683)

The Grifters

Palace PVC2180R
1990

Certificate 18 Director Stephen Frears
Suffering from lackadaisical pacing and humourless direction, three con-artists (Anjelica Huston, Annette Bening and a limp John Cusack) take nearly two hours to bring their rival scams to a messy joint conclusion. (MFB No.685)

Havana

CIC VHA1484
1990

Certificate 15 Director Sydney Pollack
Robert Redford's clean-cut image is thrown into a Havana of sordid corruption and sleazy brothels. As a self-centred poker player, Redford wears his heart of gold on the lapel of his white suit while romancing Lena Olin. (MFB No.685)

Maniac Cop 2

Medusa/20:20 Vision MO312
1990

Certificate 18 Director William Lustig
Larry Cohen, the bright-ideas man of the cheap horror movie (*Q, The Stuff, It's Alive*), fails to squeeze much fresh blood from zombie cop Matt Cordell. Robert Z'Dar reprises his role as the vengeful, indestructible body in blue. (MFB No.684)

Memphis Belle

Warner 12040
1990

Certificate 12 Director Michael Caton-Jones
Fresh-faced Americans (Matthew Modine, Tate Donovan, Billy Zane) get their chance to don bomber jackets and leather helmets only to be upstaged by a B17 flying fortress. With but a single English accent (love interest Jane Horrocks), the film's "Made in UK" label is meaningless and embarrassing. (MFB No.680)

Mr and Mrs Bridge

Palace PVC2164R

1990

Certificate PG Director James Ivory
★ Ruth Praver Jhabvala and James Ivory's adaptation of two Evan S. Connell novels achieves the miracle of a plotless, suspenseless film. The members of a prosperous Kansas family are presented in an overlapping series of finely drawn character studies. Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward offer some of the best work of their careers. (MFB No.684)

The Narrow Margin

Guild 8646

1990

Certificate 15 Director Peter Hyams
A remake of the RKO 1952 film with Richard Fleischer at the controls and Charles MacGraw locked in a train compartment with Marie Windsor. This version with Gene Hackman takes an extra half hour, having missed out the best twist in the plot along the way. (MFB No.684)

The Reflecting Skin

MCEG/Virgin VVP893

1990

Certificate 15 Director Philip Ridley
A boyhood in the wheatfields of Alberta is a lonely nightmare where every adult is a witch, bully or murderer. An unconvincing horror story. (MFB No.682)

The Rift (La Grieta)

RCA/Columbia CVT11899

1990

Certificate 15 Director J. P. Simon
There is not an incident in this lamentable ocean-floor thriller that has not already been flogged to death in a dozen other deep-sea or deep-space peril pictures. Jack Scalia and Deborah Adair join the crew of desperate actors. (MFB No.679)

Roger & Me

Warner 11978

1989

Certificate 15 Director Michael Moore
★ As his hometown of Flint in Michigan curls up to die after the closure of its car factories, Moore embarks on a quixotic quest to interview the head of General Motors – Roger Smith. He never gets as far as Smith, but has enormous fun trying and he encounters a great deal of quirky humanity on the way in this documentary. (MFB No.675)

Seeking Roger here... everywhere

Stockade

EV EVV1191

1990

Certificate 12 Director Martin Sheen
Ramon Estevez lurks in the background while brother Charlie Sheen, as a young GI, and father Martin Sheen, as the embittered old sergeant, lock horns in a military prison. (MFB No.683)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

MCEG/Virgin VVP894

1990

Certificate PG Director Steve Barron
Film critic Kim Newman's comment that the comic-strip heroes of this film never remotely convince as teenagers, mutants, ninjas or turtles says it all. (MFB No.683)

Waiting for the Light

EV EVV1204

1989

Certificate PG Director Christopher Monger
Shirley MacLaine lets rip as batty, carrot-haired Aunt Zena, purveyor of magic tricks and despair of her family. Her 'miracles' stir up excitement in a small town made nervous by the Cuban missile crisis. (MFB No.680)

Rental premiere

A Broken Dream

ITC 7710

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director John Korty

Producer Mick Lombardo Screenplay Christopher Knopf Lead Actors John Lithgow, Mary Beth Hurt, Ronny Cox 93 minutes

A cheerless weepie – the parents of a severely premature child inflict their feelings of misery and loss on the doctors who must decide the fate of the baby. Perhaps in sympathy, Lithgow and Hurt walk through their parts like zombies.

Ernest Goes to Jail

Touchstone D310652

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director John Cherry Producer Stacy Williams Screenplay Charlie Cohen Lead Actors Jim Varney, Gailard Sartain 78 minutes
The gormless screen persona of comedian Jim Varney is indulged with a dual role here – incompetent janitor Ernest and his lookalike, an evil bank president. Jail could be the best place for him.

Hitler's Daughter

CIC VHB2494

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director James A. Contner Producer Richard Luke Rothschild Screenplay Sherman Gray, Christopher Canaan, from the novel by Timothy B. Benford Lead Actors Patrick Cassidy, Melody Anderson, Veronica Cartwright, Kay Lenz 84 minutes

The Nazis are alive and well and plotting to set up a Fourth Reich in America. Three well-groomed women are within striking distance of the White House – and one of them is Adolf's offspring. Hilarious rubbish.

In Gold We Trust

First Independent VA20118

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director/Producer P. Chalong Screenplay Tony S. Suvar, Buncherd Dhawee Lead Actors Jan-Michael Vincent, Sam Jones, James Phillips 87 minutes
Yet another back-to-Vietnam movie. A group of renegade Marines have stolen the ransom gold intended for the release of some captive GIs, so the CIA sends in Jan-Michael Vincent.

A Killing in a Small Town

Odyssey ODY192

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Stephen Gyllenhal Producers Dan Witt, Courtney Pledger Screenplay Cynthia Cidre, based on the book *Evidence of Love* by John Bloom and Jim Atkinson Lead Actors Barbara Hershey, Brian Dennehy, Hal Holbrook 90 minutes
A well-deserved Emmy went to Barbara Hershey for her chilling portrayal of a church-going Texan housewife who murders her best

friend with an axe. Her eventual acquittal reveals the power that psychiatrists can wield in the US justice system.

The Maid

Walt Disney D540862

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director Ian Toyton Producer Monique Annaud Screenplay Tim Prager Lead Actors Martin Sheen, Jacqueline Bisset, Victoria Shalet 87 minutes
A romantic comedy that relies on an improbable situation for its laughs. International banker Martin Sheen tries to win over Jacqueline Bisset by becoming her domestic servant, and sets about making himself indispensable.

Mortal Passions

MCEG/Virgin VVP811

USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director Andrew Lane Producers Wayne Crawford, Andrew Lane, Gwen Field Screenplay Alan Moskowitz Lead Actors Zach Galligan, Krista Erickson, Michael Bowen 92 minutes
Adultery, murder and a suitcase of money are the familiar elements in this lamely confected plot that cannot decide whether it is a black comedy, an erotic thriller or just a parade of designer clothes.

Parent Trap Hawaiian Honeymoon

Buena Vista D140632

USA 1989

Certificate U Director Mollie Miller Producers Charles Milhaupt, Richard Luke Rothschild Screenplay John McNamara Lead Actors Hayley Mills, Barry Bostwick, John M. Jackson 86 minutes
Identical triplets sow confusion in a resort hotel. Just in case that doesn't milk enough laughs, there is Hayley Mills as two twin sisters, some plastic palm trees and men in hula skirts.

A Promise to Keep

Warner PEV12180

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director Rod Holcomb Producer Carlton Cuse Screenplay Jane Yacmolinsky Lead Actors William Russ, Mimi Kennedy, Dana Delany, Frances Fisher 92 minutes
Father-of-three Carl and his wife Jane decide to adopt their four orphaned nephews. Fitting enough groceries into the fridge is only the first of their problems.

Revealing Evidence

CIC VHA1463

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Michael Switzer Executive Producer Tom Selleck



Screenplay Chris Abbott **Lead Actors** Stanley Tucci, Mary Page Keller, Finn Carter *89 minutes*
 Attorney-at-law Keller helps handsome detective Tucci polish off a shoe-fetish serial killer case, but becomes concerned that the thirteenth victim was wearing the wrong pair of high heels. Deduction and seduction in Honolulu capably handled.

Seven Minutes

MGM/UA 54227
 USA 1989

Certificate 15 **Director** Klaus Maria Brandauer **Producers** Moritz Borman, Rainer Soehnlein **Screenplay** Stephen Sheppard, based on his novel *The Artisan* **Lead Actors** Klaus Maria Brandauer, Brian Dennehy, Rebecca Miller *90 minutes*

★ Directing his first film, Brandauer picks out a wonderful character for himself – the watchmaker Georg Elser who tried to blow up Hitler in a beer hall in 1939. Suspenseful drama, though the outcome is inevitable.

Signs of Life

MCEG/Virgin VVP896
 USA 1989

Certificate 15 **Director** John Coles **Producers** Marcus Viscidi, Andrew Reichsman **Screenplay** Mark Malone **Lead Actors** Arthur Kennedy, Vincent D'Onofrio, Kevin J. O'Connor, Beau Bridges *86 minutes*

In a dull New England town, Beau Bridges is about to close his boatyard, the young men are facing unemployment and the local half-wit goes missing, presumed drowned. The intervention of a grandfatherly ghost is supposed to give a lift to the proceedings.

Spymaker – The Secret Life of Ian Fleming

First Independent VA20126
 UK 1990

Certificate 15 **Director** Ferdinand Fairfax **Producer** Aida Young **Screenplay** Robert J. Avrech **Lead Actors** Jason Connery, Kristin Scott Thomas, Joss Ackland *96 minutes*
 Jason Connery bowdlerises the youth of Ian Fleming into the adventures and conquests of James Bond Jnr. Some wit, and a splendidly disdainful Patricia Hodge as Lady Evelyn, the writer's society mother.

UFO Cafe

ITC 9135
 USA 1990

Certificate U **Director** Paul Schneider **Producer** Randy T. Siegel **Screenplay** Beth Polso **Lead Actors** Beau Bridges, Richard Mulligan, Paul Dooley *96 minutes*

Beau Bridges finds himself stranded in another small town (see *Signs of Life*, above) where everything has closed down. All the more disconcerting as he claims to have commuted there by accident from the planet Zabar.

Retail

The Abyss

CBS/Fox 1561
 USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 **Director** James Cameron Cameron switches from the starlit bible-black of *Aliens* to the murky-blue terror of the ocean floor. Gritty good-guy divers Ed Harris and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio create enough suspense to give you the bends. (MFB No.670)

Body Heat

Warner PES20005
 USA 1981 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 **Director** Lawrence Kasdan



★ Heatwave nights in Miami, where sultry Matty (Kathleen Turner) persuades lawyer-lover Ned (William Hurt) to kill her rich husband. A powerful if somewhat self-conscious *film noir*, it established the critical reputations of both director and stars. (MFB No.576)

Casual Sex?

CIC VHR1325
 USA 1990 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 **Director** Genevieve Robert **Producers** Ivan Reitman, Ilona Herzberg, Sheldon Kahn

Screenplay Wendy Goldman, Judy Toll **Lead Actors** Lea Thompson, Victoria Jackson, Stephen Shellen
 Two attractive, single women book their holiday in a health resort and embark on a determined manhunt, in particular for something called "commitment".

Casualties of War

RCA/Columbia CVR21458
 USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 **Director** Brian De Palma This late addendum to Hollywood's fat Vietnam file is a violent guilt trip back to the jungles of South-East Asia. Conscience figure Michael J. Fox is horrified by the acts of racial contempt and casual raping committed by his comrades. Sean Penn plays the bad guy, and some, but not enough, rough justice is meted out. (MFB No.673)

Cat Chaser

EV EVS1049
 USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 **Director** Abel Ferrara The shabby, sun-drenched Florida coast seems to have become the new home of *film noir* (see *Body Heat*, above). The conspiratorial couple here are Kelly McGillis and Peter Weller, with a plot by Elmore Leonard. (MFB No.671)

Cookie

Polygram GLD50792
 USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 **Director** Susan Seidelman
 Playing his old Mafia buddies off against the FBI, reformed mobster Peter Falk plans for retirement, helped and hindered by his daffy daughter, Emily Lloyd. A screwball comedy that goes desperately seeking something, although it is hard to know what. (MFB No.670)

DA

RCA/Columbia CVR 22754
 USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate PG **Director** Matt Clark Barnard Hughes reprises his stage role as a grumpy ghost come to haunt his own funeral. Martin Sheen plays respectful foil as the playwright son. (MFB No.663)

Distant Thunder

CIC VHR2348
 USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 **Director** Rick Rosenthal **Producer** Robert Schaffel **Screenplay** Robert Stitzel **Lead Actors** John Lithgow, Ralph Macchio, Kerrie Keane
 The usual squad of traumatised veterans swap the jungles of Vietnam for the rainswept forest hills of

Washington State. Callow kid Ralph Macchio goes in search of his long-lost father John Lithgow.

Do the Right Thing

CIC VHR1381
 USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 **Director** Spike Lee
 ★ As the temperature rises on the hottest day of summer, a race-riot boils up in the New York community of Bedford-Stuyvesant. Spike Lee's challenging film looks at the tension between blacks and Italians sharing the same neighbourhood. (MFB No.666)

Elvis and the Beauty Queen

Castle CAS5150
 USA 1981 Price £7.99

Certificate 15 **Director** Gus Trikonis **Producer** David Gerber **Screenplay** Julia Cameron **Lead Actors** Stephanie Zimbalist, Don Johnson, Ann Dusenberry
 Don Johnson finds himself on stage in sideburns and a rhinestone suit for the 'true story' of how Elvis got mixed up with Memphis beauty queen Linda Thomson.

Field of Dreams

Polygram GLD50092
 USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate PG **Director** Phil Alden Robinson
 ★ An Iowa farmer has a vision which tells him to build a baseball pitch in his backyard, and the ghosts of "Shoeless" Joe Jackson and the Chicago White Sox emerge from the cornfields to fill the bases. Oddly compelling fantasy with some very powerful performances. (MFB No.671)

I Know My First Name is Steven

Odyssey ODY195
 USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 **Director** Larry Elikann **Producer** Kim C. Friese **Screenplay** J. P. Miller, Cynthia Whitcomb **Lead Actors** Cindy Pickett, John Ashton, Corin "Corky" Nemec
 The true story of seven-year-old Steven Stayner, abducted and fraudulently adopted by a stranger he knows, despite constant abuse, as "Dad". "Dad" kidnaps another boy to complete his bizarre menage. The boys escape and Steven has to deal with parental reunion and the trauma of his past.

In Country

Warner PES11888
 USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 **Director** Norman Jewison **Emily Lloyd** as a confused Kentucky high-school girl who falls in with her melancholy Uncle Emmett (Bruce

Willis with a hippie hairdo). Both have scars from the Vietnam war. A healing visit to the Vets Memorial Wall in Washington provides the unconvincing resolution. (MFB No.672)

The Killer (Diexue Shuang Xiong)

Palace PVC2177S

Hong Kong 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 18 Director John Woo
(Yuen Yuen)

★ Touted in the West as the finest flower of the martial chivalry genre of Hong Kong cinema. Starring Chow Yun-Fat and Danny Lee as a killer and cop who become obsessed with one another, the manic action contrives to wipe out most of the colony in a blazing series of stunts and gunfights. (MFB No.680)

K-9

CIC VHR1391

USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 12 Director Rod Daniel
An aggressive Alsatian partners cop James Belushi on the sniff for a narcotics gang. (MFB No.669)

Lambada! The Forbidden Dance

RCA/Columbia CVR22754

USA 1990 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Greydon Clark
Producers Marc S. Fischer, Richard L. Albert Screenplay Roy Langsdon, John Platt based on the story by Joseph Goldman Lead Actors Laura Herring, Jeff James, Sid Haig, Richard Lynch 97 minutes

Featuring a former Miss USA and choreographed by Miranda Garrison (of *Dirty Dancing* fame), the film also manages to squeeze in a green subplot involving the quest of the heroine to save the rainforests of the Amazon.

Lion of the Desert

Legend LGV10043

USA 1980 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Moustapha Akkad

An historical epic whose release has been delayed because of sensitivities over the Gulf War. Mussolini (Rod Steiger) sends out the troops to crush the 1929 Bedouin resistance in the Libyan desert. Anthony Quinn, Irene Papas and Sir John Gielgud are the noble Arab rebels. (MFB No.571)

The Message (Al-Risalah)

Legend LGN10042

USA 1976 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director Moustapha Akkad

Quinn and Papas return (see *Lion of the Desert*, above) for a three-hour exposition of the life of the Prophet Mohammed. The lush orchestration,

as for *Lion of the Desert*, is by Maurice Jarre. (MFB No.512)

Permanent Record

CIC VHR2325

USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Marisa Silver
Producer Frank Mancuso Jr
Screenplay Jarre Fees, Alice Liddle, Larry Ketron Lead Actors Alan Boyce, Keanu Reeves, Michelle Meyrink David Sinclair (Boyce) shocks the high school by taking his own life. The film's laudable quest for understanding and sense of concern has, unfortunately, been parodied by black comedies like *Heathers*.

Plain Clothes

CIC VHR 2337

USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director Martha Coolidge
Producers Richard Wechsler, Michael Manheim Screenplay A. Scott Frank Lead Actors Arliss Howard, George Wendt, Suzy Amis, Diane Ladd 94 minutes

A twenty-four-year-old detective (Howard) is sent back to class posing as a pupil when his little brother is accused of a teacher's murder. His romance with schoolgirl Suzy Amis should not be misconstrued - she's a grown-up in disguise too.

Pocket Money

Castle CAS5152

USA 1972 Price £7.99

Certificate 15 Director Stuart Rosenberg
Paul Newman once formed a production company called First Artists to follow the example of Chaplin and Pickford's United Artists, and give actors more say in their films. Unfortunately, the best script that Newman could find to launch his idea was this limping horse-opera. He joins Lee Marvin in Mexico to raise hell and round up steers for the Texas rodeos.

Police Story (Jingcha Gushi)

Palace PVC2098S

Hong Kong 1985 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Jackie Chan
With fifteen minutes cut from the original 18-rated version, and with the leading character's name bizarrely redubbed from Ka Kui Chan to Kevin, this hardly deserves its billing as a "long-unavailable" classic. But the script's candid assumptions of Hong Kong police corruption are amusing. (MFB No.637)

Reds

CIC VHR2057

USA 1981 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Warren Beatty
★ A laudable attempt to dignify the history of American socialism

through the life stories of radical journalist John Reed (Beatty) and his proto-feminist wife, writer Louise Bryant (Diane Keaton). (MFB No.578)

Running on Empty

Polygram GLD50802

USA 1988 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Sidney Lumet
Judd Hirsch and Christine Lahti are a 60s couple who have exhausted their idealism, but are still on the road, running from an FBI arrest warrant with their weary adolescent kids. The picture of family life on the margins of society is drawn with immense sympathy. (MFB No.667)

The Shootist

CIC VHR 2491

USA 1976 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director Don Siegel

★ The best of John Wayne's twilight films, in which he plays an ageing, cancer-afflicted gunfighter. There is an added treat with James Stewart as a string-tied, black-bagged doctor. (MFB No.513)

Star Trek V - The Final Frontier

CIC VHR2374

USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director William Shatner
After finding something useful to do (saving whales) in the lively *Star Trek IV*, the crew of geriatric spacepersons loses all sense of humour, embarking on an absurd mission to meet Almighty God. Leonard Nimoy giving Shatner a turn at the director's helm was a big mistake. (MFB No.670)

That Sinking Feeling

Odyssey ODY147

UK 1979 Price £9.99

Certificate PG Director Bill Forsyth

★ One of the funniest films ever made in the British Isles features a semi-amateur cast of Glaswegians.



'That Sinking Feeling': not the Corleones

A bunch of out-of-work schoolfriends decide to go for broke and burglarise a vanload of stainless steel sink units. An authentic shoestring masterpiece. (MFB No.562)

When Harry Met Sally

Palace PVC2158S

USA 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Rob Reiner
Nora Ephron's bitter-sweet, sophisticated script makes New York seem likeable. In a town where people seem to do nothing but meet and eat, Harry (Billy Crystal) and Sally (Meg Ryan) stumble through failed love affairs and talk each other around to true love. (MFB No.671)

Wilt

Polygram GLD50082

UK 1989 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Michael Tuchner
A long-suffering lecturer dreams of murdering his nagging wife, but is unable to carry it through. Tom Sharpe's world of blow-up dolls, put-upon males and provincial university intrigue is tiresome in spite of energetic performances by Griff Rhys-Jones and Mel Smith. (MFB No.670)



Remembrance of things past in 'Reds'

SCREENING EUROPE: IMAGES OF POST-COLONIALISM?

**A Conference
at the
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Film Theatre
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1991**

This conference will focus on how European films are shaping, and are being shaped by the dramatic changes currently experienced in Europe.

It will feature notable film-makers, critics and commentators who will each address the issues raised for them by a short season of films to be screened at the NFT in the week leading up to the conference. These films include: *Passion* (Jean-Luc Godard), *The Tempest* (Derek Jarman), *Chocolat* (Claire Denis), *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (Pedro Almodovar), *Time of the Gypsies* (Emir Kusturica).

The participants are:
Chantal Akerman, John Akomfrah, Ien Ang,
John Caughie, Colin MacCabe, Nancy Condee,
Claire Denis, Felix de Rooy, Jean-Luc Godard,
Stuart Hall, Fredric Jameson, Isaac Julien, Patrizia Lombardo, Doreen Massey, Vladimir Padunov.

There will also be a preview screening of an exciting new British film on Friday evening.



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Looking inwards

From Robert Rider

There are two strains in Tony Rayns' article on Japanese cinema (May 1991). The first questions why so few Japanese films are shown now in Britain. Unfortunately numerous national cinemas, and not merely Japan's, have almost disappeared from British screens in recent years. 1988 to 1990 saw an average of three German films released in Britain per year, compared to two Japanese.

The virtual disappearance of non-English language films from our screens is an important issue which needs to be seen in terms of inter-related economic and political issues. For example, many foreign films in the early 70s could be picked up by independent distributors for a song and turned into a tidy profit. As foreign producers became more alert and asked higher prices, distributors were unwilling to take the risk. At another level, recession and rising unemployment meant that cinemagoers had less money to spend, and were probably less likely to take a chance on an obscure, subtitled film.

But all of this is overshadowed by macro-factors such as the swing to the political right in Britain in the 80s. It is probably in a liberal/left climate that audiences are interested in cultures and issues beyond their own, and indeed many foreign films were of a radical and challenging nature. With the advance of Thatcherism, audiences became more inward-looking and looked to film for entertainment rather than challenge. Meanwhile the leviathan of Hollywood marched on, and especially following the collapse of Eastern Europe, encroached on a number of national cinemas.

Tony Rayns' other point concerned the relative paucity of contemporary films in the Barbican's forthcoming Japanese film season, 'Big Fifty'. As was explained to Tony, the programme is still not finalised, and the version he reviewed was number four. There has been a further list drawn up since then, with another (final) version still to come.

Yet even on the basis of what he saw, his criticisms strike me as invalid. Twenty-three of the fifty films are from 1980 onwards. For a season that purports to present an overview of Japanese cinema, from silent films to the present, it could be justifiably

argued that it is overweighted towards the present.

He also makes reference to the limits of the "conceptual framework" of 'Big Fifty'. To survey Japanese film history within fifty films is intrinsically problematic, and the season can inevitably only provide an overview. But it is important to note that the event has been mainly programmed in Tokyo, by a committee of critics, producers and others in the industry. In short, the season represents the way the Japanese see themselves, not the perspective of a Western programmer.

To move to details. While it is clear that Tony Rayns may have found Nakahara's *The Cherry Orchard* disappointing, it was one of the biggest home-produced films in Japan in 1990, and if one aim of the season is to represent current aspects of the film industry, a mega-hit of 1990 cannot be omitted.

That British distributors have neglected Japanese films cannot be denied. However, there can be little dispute that 'Big Fifty' at the Barbican is a major step forward in the presentation of Japanese cinema, and will be a great success. In Tony's words, it may just lead the British press to start taking Japanese cinema seriously again. *Barbican Cinema, London EC1*

● *Tony Rayns replies* In his zeal to challenge the "leviathan of Hollywood", Robert Rider chooses to overlook both my point that the critical establishment must shoulder much of the blame for failing to keep pace with changes in Japanese cinema and the fact that most of the Japanese films recently released in Britain have been significant popular successes without substantial critical support.

Mr Rider's analogy with the situation of German cinema is false: the reason that German films have largely vanished from our screens is that the key directors of the 70s have died, emigrated or lapsed into inactivity while no new generation has appeared to take their place.

The central point about Japanese cinema in the last two decades is that talent and initiative have devolved to the independent sector, where the Western film establishment has not deigned to go looking for it. If Thatcherism and the hegemony of Hollywood are to blame, as Robert Rider assures us, how does he explain the fact that twenty-odd Chinese films have come into British distribution since 1986.

As to the Barbican season. Since writing the article I have been in Japan, where I found my own misgivings about this kind of scattershot

approach to Japanese film history shared by critics and industry personnel, including some of those on the committee planning the programme for the Barbican.

A serial story

From Suzanne Moore

Following the uniformly limited and limiting reading of *American Psycho* by the British literary establishment, who informed the public that the book wasn't worth reading (then why was it worth reviewing?), it came as some relief to read Amy Taubin's thoughtful essay on serial killer movies (May 1991).

If killing has become an overburdened metaphor for the ills of the fin-de-millennium, the links between murder, misogyny and masculinity still need to be made. And strongly. This is not the same thing as saying that "All men are rapists", but if, as Taubin pointed out, killing is the bizarre apotheosis of the ideology of individuality, how come we are only just beginning to hear of female serial killers. And is this something to be celebrated?

We also have to investigate the uncomfortable reaction of the female spectator in relation to all these fictions. Women also enjoy these films. They share "the need to be terrified" that Easton Ellis has described. And women form a large proportion of the readers of true crime fiction.

Yet as with rape fantasies (fantasising about rape is never the same thing as being raped), needing to be terrified is not the same thing as being too scared to go out at night. Women necessarily and inevitably have to distinguish between fantasy and reality. Which is why I think the distanciation device is used with greater ease by both male directors and critics.

Witness the production and reception of *Twin Peaks*, where everything – including sexual violence – is put in quotation marks. Distance, irony or whatever you want to call it becomes an aesthetic device that effectively gags any awkward and indeed political questions. In all of this we are left disturbed rather than satisfied, but then the ability to disturb has become one of the most highly prized of the criteria by which we judge such work.

Thus men kill, women get killed, but isn't it all wonderfully art-directed. And now that the new psycho killer has become so sexy, slick and sophisticated, one is prompted to ask what more could a girl want in a man? Nothing, perhaps, except that he let her live.

London WC1



Mega-hit: Nakahara's 'The Cherry Orchard'

Courtesy of a computer, Monroe stars in a new film, reports Benjamin Woolley

Resurrection

Thanks to the power of merchandising, Marilyn Monroe allegedly earns more today than she ever did. In California, her likeness is said to be worth in excess of \$1m a year. But what could she earn if she were brought back to life? What if it were possible to reproduce not just her likeness, but the full, voluptuous, walking, talking, wiggling, giggling person?

A few years ago regulars on the computer graphics conference circuit caught their first glimpse of how some form of resurrection may one day be achieved. A Canadian production called *Rendezvous in Montreal* featured Humphrey Bogart and Monroe meeting for the first time in the Café Montreal. They were not, of course, the real Bogart and Monroe (perhaps there never was a real Bogart and Monroe). They were purely synthetic, computer-generated versions. You could tell.

Triggers

The film, just a few minutes long, showed Bogart chatting up Monroe at a cocktail bar, coaxing her to transform from stone back into flesh and blood (is this making sense?). She did so, whereupon they touched hands. He drew back his lips in his inimitable way, revealing badly finished tent-peg teeth. Her skintones began as granite, turning to burnished gold before she

got her colour back; he was the same complexion all the way through, one that suggested vulcanised Play-Doh. He spoke with the voice of an amateur impressionist. She parted her lips to form something that didn't look like her famous smile, but vaguely reminded you of it. It was grotesque, but it was the world's first movie to star synthetic actors and the first known recreation of identifiable human beings, so we were impressed.

Despite the mystification of star quality, we know it is basically a formula. All stars are synthetic – programmed by the script and executed by the studio system. In *Rendezvous in Montreal*, the process had simply been mechanised. Through simulation rather than imitation, Bogart and Monroe had effectively been turned into the sorts of robots that could one day help automate the Hollywood production line.

But what programme could convincingly code the subtle qualities of a Bogart, a Monroe or a John Wayne (somehow easier to imagine, that one)? How can something as ineffable as human behaviour be reproduced computationally? With less trouble than you might think. As cartoonists have demonstrated for decades, the simplest visual cues can suggest the most complex human characteristics – even when those cues are supplied by other members of

the animal kingdom. You just have to find out what primitive behaviours combine to trigger the desired response.

Scary

At MIT's Media Lab, they have been trying to discover just this by seeing what sort of performance they can get out of a cockroach and a praying mantis. Both creatures were developed by Media Lab's animation research team. The cockroach was called Cootie, and featured in a short animation called *Cootie Gets Scared*.

Cootie was created as an independent agent, with its own crude form of artificial intelligence. Cootie knew how to move. The monster mantis in the Media Lab's ongoing *Grimacing Evil Death* project is even cleverer, apparently being capable of a full suite of motor functions. Both can take directions – simple ones, like "walk".

It's a start. The biggest problem is not recreating character, but simulating more fundamental things like the subtle articulations of the human body. That is what makes insects, with their rigid exoskeletons, so much simpler to animate, and the less than endoskeletal Monroe so much harder. But the backroom boys will get there one day. They are confident that if they can manage smart invertebrates, Hollywood stars should be within their reach.

Professor Potemkin's competition

Letters and postcards to this page continue to pour in from all over the world, but only one reader has stumbled across the solution to my David Lean brainteaser.

The challenge was to find the hidden connection between his two masterpieces, 'Brief Encounter' and 'A Passage to India'. The link, as spotted by Ms Harriet Good of Brussels, was that both films were originally written for the Rank studio as comedy scripts.

Early drafts of the two were (respectively) entitled 'Doctor in a Dither' and 'Doctor in the Dock'. A third script for the planned series, the hilarious 'Doctor Zhivago', was eventually shot as the director had always intended.

To move on to last month's photo contest, the dozens of cinema buffs who thought they recognised the waterlogged characters of the faded film still must contain their patience a little longer. The actors' names, and the prizewinner, will be revealed in a future issue.

For the interim, readers may

address themselves to helping the faceless unfortunates illustrated opposite. To recap on the competition rules: you are invited to help the restorers of the National Film Archive in their battle against the celluloid virus 'face fungus' by identifying the actors whose features have been blanked out by the infection. In case of a tie-break, please submit a single line of dialogue appropriate to the scene.

The most amusing correct entry will win a videocassette of David Lean's 'Lawrence of Arabia - The Director's Cut' (published by The Hollywood Collection, normal price £9.99), which features Eric Idle and Dexter Fletcher.

Entries by postcard or fax to Professor Potemkin at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL (Fax: 071-436 2327) by 15 June. Hurry to avoid disappointment. (Professor Potemkin is a Senior Lecturer in Cinema Studies at Fitzrovia Film Foundation.)



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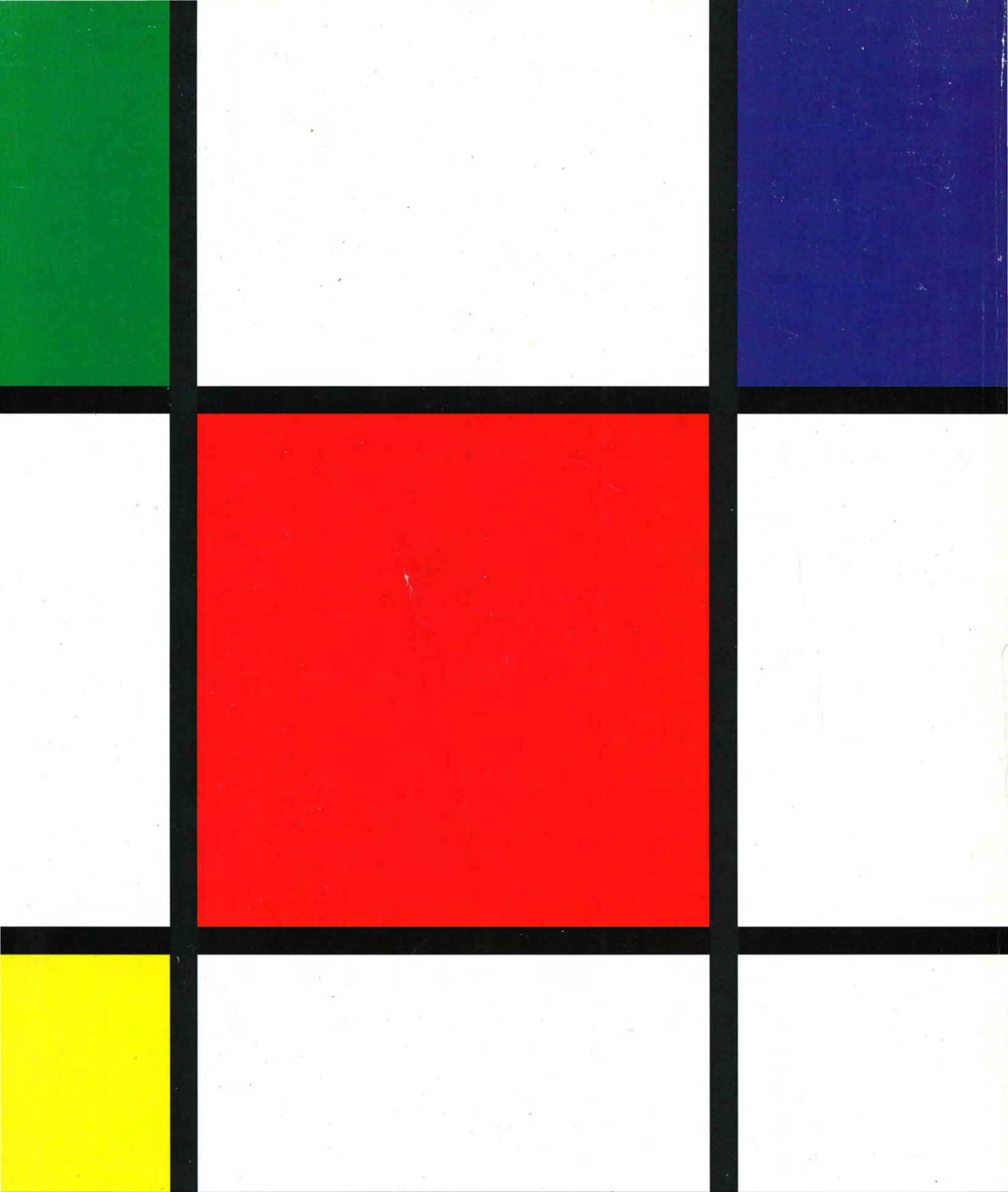
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